

THE 'ABBĀSID ARCHITECTURE OF SĀMARRĀ IN THE REIGN  
OF BOTH AL-MU'TAṢIM AND AL-MUTAWAKKIL

BY

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PREFACE

I would like to express my great pleasure at having been given the opportunity by the Faculty of Arts in the University of Edinburgh of discussing the nature of the 'Abbāsīd architecture at Sāmarrā in the reign of al-Mu'taṣim and al-Mutawakkil. The study was undertaken primarily with the idea of revealing the characteristics of the early 'Abbāsīd architectural style.

'Abbāsīd architecture in general has received the attention of a number of recent authors and archaeologists namely: Viollet, Le Strange, Herzfeld and Creswell; their works cover most of the main problems of 'Abbāsīd architecture quite extensively but, nevertheless, certain aspects are still open to discussion.

The Round City of al-Manṣūr at Baghdād has been discussed only on the basis of the literary references, for its ruins are covered by the buildings of the modern town. With Sāmarrā however the case is quite different, for most of its buildings are still standing, and the reports presented during the last century concerning the various buildings there have been based both on the historical evidence and on that gathered from field work.

Sāmarrā falls within an important period in the history of Islamic archaeology, its importance lying in the fact that it rose and declined within the limited period of only fifty-

eight years. Thus it is possible to date with some accuracy those examples of Islamic archaeology which are of uncertain date by analyzing their characteristics and comparing them with those of firmly dated structures at Sāmarrā.

This study consists of five chapters, each one divided into different sections. In the first chapter I have discussed the ancient site of Sāmarrā before the rule of al-Mu'taṣim; the work has proved without doubt that the place chosen by the Calif was inhabited from an early period. The geographical references as Futūḥ by al-Baladhurī, Mu'jam, by Yā'qūt and Buldān, by Yā'qūbī, as well as the archaeological reports have helped considerably in presenting this study.

In the second chapter I have given a historical introduction to the 'Abbāsid period at Sāmarrā including the rule of al-Mu'taṣim and his move from Baghdād to Sāmarrā. The historical sources, such as Ta'riḫ, by Yā'qūbī, al-Akhbār aṭ-ṭiwāl by Dīnawarī, Ta'rik, by Ṭabarī, Murūj by Mas'ūdī, Kāmil by ibn al-Athīr, were adopted as a base for this study.

In the third chapter, I have dealt with the buildings constructed at the time of al-Mu'taṣim apart from the Great Mosque which was built by him, although I was anxious to discover such information as was available in the ancient Arabic sources. Unfortunately, however, nothing has been recorded concerning its original features, although I went through all the references

in which one could hope to find something useful. The works of Viollet, Herzfeld, Creswell, Dr. Susa, and the General Directorate of Antiquities in Iraq, were used as fundamental references.

In the fourth chapter I have discussed the historical period of al-Mutawakkil, and the architectural works executed by him, as well as the geographical and historical books mentioned above, as well as the material presented by Herzfeld, Creswell and Fransis and 'Ali.

The last chapter is devoted to a discussion of the architectural origins of the Malwiya of Sāmarrā and its relationship to the minaret of Ibn Ṭūlūn's mosque. The study has shown, with the support of the historical evidence and the architectural features, that the Malwiya of Sāmarrā with its own unique shape, was invented for the first time in the 'Abbāsid period, and it has also shown that the minaret of Ibn Ṭūlūn's Mosque at Cairo was influenced by the Pharos of Alexandria and the Malwiya of Sāmarrā.

Finally, I would like to point out that with respect to the transliteration of the Arabic names into English I have followed the convention adopted by the Muir Institute of Edinburgh University. In this matter, in particular, I must express my thanks to Professor W. Montgomery Watt, for his assistance.

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ABBREVIATIONS EMPLOYEDBooks, Authors and Periodicals:

<u>A.A.S.</u>	Suhrāb, <u>Kitab 'ajā'ib al-aqālīm as-sab a.</u>
<u>A.B.A.E.</u>	al-Qazwīnī, <u>Athār al-bilād wa a Akhbar al-'ibād.</u>
A.F.	Abū al-Fidā, <u>Kitab Taquīm al-buldān</u>
<u>Ansāb</u>	as-Sam'ānī, <u>Kitab al-ansāb.</u>
<u>Archäologische Reise</u>	Herzfeld
<u>B.C.A.B.U.</u>	<u>Bulletin of the College of Arts - Baghdad University.</u>
<u>Buldān</u>	Ya'qūbī <u>al-buldān</u>
D.A.I.	Directorate of Antiquities in Iraq, <u>Sāmarrā, Hafriyyat Sāmarrā.</u>
Dinawarī	ad-Dinawarī, <u>al-Akhbār at-ṭiwāl</u>
<u>E.M.A.</u>	Creswell, <u>Early Muslim Architecture</u>
<u>D.P.M.</u>	Viollet, <u>Description du Palais de al-Moutasim Fils d'Haroun-al-Raschid a Samarra.</u>
<u>Erster</u>	Herzfeld. <u>Erster Vorläufige Bericht über die Ausgrabungen Von Samarra.</u>
<u>Futūḥ</u>	al-Balādhurī, <u>Futūḥ al-Buldān</u>
<u>Ḥawqal</u>	Ibn Ḥawqal, <u>Kitāb al-Masālik wa-l-mamalik</u>
I.F.	Ibn-al-Faqīh, <u>Kitāb al-buldān</u>
<u>J.A.O.S.</u>	<u>Journal of the American Oriental Society</u>
<u>J.R.G.S.</u>	<u>The Journal of the Royal Geographical Society</u>

<u>Kāmil</u>	Ibn-al-Athīr, <u>al-Kāmil fī t-ta'rikh</u>
<u>Khaldūn</u>	Ibn Khaldūn, <u>Muqaddimat Ibn-Khaldūn li-Kitāb al-'ibar</u>
<u>Khaṭīb</u>	al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, <u>Ta'rikh Baghdād</u>
<u>M.A.M.A.</u>	al-'Umarī, <u>Masālik al-absār fī mamālik al-amṣār</u>
<u>Ma ārif</u>	ibn Qutaybā, <u>Kitāb al-Ma'ārif</u>
<u>Marāṣid</u>	Ibn 'Abd-l-Ḥaqq, <u>marāṣid al-ittilā' 'ala asmā' al-amkina wa-l-buqā'</u>
<u>Maqdīsī</u>	al-Maqdīsī, <u>Aḥsan at-taqāsīm fī ma'rifat al-aqālīm</u>
<u>Maqrīzī</u>	al-Maqrīzī, <u>as-Sulūk Khīṭaṭ</u>
<u>Mitteilung</u>	Herzfeld, Mitteilung über die Arbeiten der Zweiten Kampagne Von Samarra, Der Islam.
<u>M.Q.M.</u>	Fikri, <u>Masajid al-Qāhira wa-madārisuha</u>
<u>Mu 'jam</u>	Yā'qūt, <u>Mu 'jam al-Buldān</u>
<u>Murūj</u>	al-Mas'ūdī, <u>Murūj adh-dhāb wa ma'ādin al-Jawhar</u>
<u>P.M.S.</u>	Viollet, <u>Un Palais Musulman du IX<sup>e</sup> Siecle</u>
<u>R.S.</u>	Susa Rayy Sāmarrā' fī-l-'Uṣūr al-'Abbāsiyya.
<u>R.T.I.</u>	Aḥmad, <u>The role of Turk in Iraq</u>
<u>S.A.E.M.A.</u>	Creswell, <u>Asharst Account of Early Muslim Architecture</u>
<u>Sāmarrā</u>	Herzfeld, <u>Sāmarrā Aufnahmen und Untersuchungen Zur islamischen Archaologie</u>
<u>Ṭabarī</u>	aṭ-Ṭabarī, <u>Ta'rikh ar-rusul wa-l-mulūk</u>
<u>Tanbīh</u>	al-Mas'ūdī, <u>Kitāb at-tanbīh wa-l-Ishrāf</u>
<u>Ta'rikh</u>	al-Ya'qūbī, <u>Ta'rikh</u>

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C H A P T E R    I

THE ANCIENT SITE OF SĀMARRĀ BEFORE THE RULE  
OF AL-MU'TAŞIM

1

In discussing the development of a city, one must give considerable thought to the nature of the site on which it was built. For the motives for building cities, in ancient and in modern times, have been various ranging from military needs to commercial or political purposes, or even the need for a haven for rest and recuperation.

Cities serving military purposes need to be strategically situated, to control supply-lines, channels of communication, and possible routes for retreat.

Cities designed to meet commercial needs must be centrally placed in the network of land or river communications, while in order to be well situated for political purposes, a capital must be in the centre of the area it dominates, particularly in the case of the capital of a large country, in order to make peacetime administration easier, and to facilitate control of rebellion in time of war.<sup>(1)</sup>

In contrast a city built for recuperation, should have available all the factors necessary for amusement in order that the residents may be able to have a quiet and pleasant time.

Sāmarrā was built as the capital of the 'Abbāsīd Empire, and the investigation of this ancient site is very important. In this chapter I intend to discuss the ancient site of Sāmarrā and briefly to describe the site which Mu'taṣim chose for his capital city.

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1. See al-Amīd, Baghdād The Round City of al-Manṣūr, pp.57-9.

The modern town of Sāmarrā lies on the left bank of the Tigris, about 130 kilometres north of Baghdād.<sup>(1)</sup> It was built over the ruins of the city Surra-man-ra'ā, the old 'Abbāsīd Capital, whose ruins extended all along the high bank of the valley of the Tigris from the second arm of the Nahrawān at Qa'im in the south to its arm in the north.<sup>(2)</sup> Therefore the ruins extend for about 34 kilometres, 8 kilometres of the south of the present town, and 26 to the north.<sup>(3)</sup>

A city that is so extensive inevitably draws the attention of writers and historians, al-Qazwīnī said of it: "It is a great town both as regards its buildings and its people" and he also said: "There has never been, on earth, a better more beautiful or larger city than Sāmarrā".<sup>(4)</sup>

It appears that the city which the 'Abbāsīd Capital occupied was known in the periods before the 'Abbāsīd dynasty, for the archaeological discoveries have established that a city had existed there from prehistoric times.

In the year 1930-1931 Herzfeld made an archaeological excavation in Sāmarrā, including the area of the cemetery which was discovered at a place called "Shabbāt al-Ḥawī" overlooking the Tigris river. This lies near the street of "Bab an-Nasiria" [The gate of an-Naṣīria] at the north of present Sāmarrā and is about one mile from "Bait al-Khaliph" [The Caliph's House] in the

1. R.S., 1, p. 46.

2. J.R.G.S., XI, 1841, p. 126.

3. D.A.I., Sāmarrā, p.7. while Susa mentions in R.S., 1, p.46 that the ruins were extended nearly 9 kilometres south of the present town and about 25 kilometres north of it.

4. A.B.A.I., p.386.

south which was discovered during a previous excavation carried out by Herzfeld in 1912-1913. These excavations proved that both the graves and the painted pottery found in them were of the Neolithic period, similar to that from prehistoric Iranian sites. The period to which the Sāmarrā graves belong is known as "Ḥalāf Period"<sup>(1)</sup> and comes after the "New Stone Age" from which its remains are distinguished by their motif of the decoration, their shapes and the varied colours.

In addition to these pottery vessels, the people of Ḥalaf left some figures made of baked clay, and a large number of sculptured amulets.<sup>(2)</sup> Dr. Susa records,<sup>(3)</sup> that he found, during his inspection of the ruins of Sāmarrā, some pottery of the prehistoric period and he adds that it is of the same kind as that found at "Shabāt al-Ḥawī" in a mound called "Tell es-Ṣawwān"<sup>(4)</sup> [Mound of flint] (see Fig. 1, map no.1).

This site was first noted by Ernst Herzfeld in 1911 during the course of the German Excavations at Sāmarrā.<sup>(5)</sup> Susa contacted Prof. Herzfeld informing him of the discoveries at

1. R.S., I, pp.52f; This period is called "Halaf period" after the archaeological site known as "Tell Khalaf" which is situated in Syria at the upper part of Khabūr River, about 140 miles North-West of Nineveh where a great number of decorated ancient vessels were discovered by Baron Max Von Oppenheim underneath the Hithian period. It seems that those vessels were similar to those of the same date at Sāmarrā.
2. R.S., I, p.53.
3. Ibid., p.53.
4. The site is situated on the eastern bank of the Tigris some eleven kilometres downstream from Sāmarrā.
5. Herzfeld, Die Ausgrabungen Von Samarra, V, p.5.

this site. Prof. Herzfeld in his reply confirmed the existence of the pottery at the site, and he also adds that it was an old cemetery of the prehistoric period; there is nothing to indicate that any buildings belonging to that period survived.<sup>(1)</sup> Because Tell es-Şawwān is an important site, the Directorate of Iraqi Antiquities paid special attention to it, sending there a special expedition in 1964.<sup>(2)</sup>

The material found on the surface of the mound comprised crude and incised pottery of Ḥassuna,<sup>(3)</sup> together with numerous painted potsherds and flint and obsidian artifacts. This evidence led the Iraqi Directorate General of Antiquities<sup>(4)</sup> to conclude that the occupation of Tell es-Şawwān was limited to a period stretching from some time during the sixth into the early fifth millenium B.C., after which it was effectively abandoned. As the Directorate General of Antiquities declared, the purpose of

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1. R.S., 1, p.54.

2. Operations were started at Tell es-Şawwān on 17th February, 1964, by a team from the Department's technical staff under the direction of Behnam Abu as-Soof, with others of assistant archaeologists. The site was visited continually throughout the season by the Director General Dr. Faişal El-Wailly and the Inspector-General Professor Fuad Safar.

3. The Ḥassuna Period, as Goff says in Symbols of Prehistoric Mesopotamia, p.1, named from the principal site where evidence for its existence has been found, contains the earliest extensive collection of ornamental artifacts in Mesopotamia. It was confined to northern Mesopotamia, but was widespread there. Its clearest affinities were with the West Syro-Gilicia. The Ḥassuna Period was a time when stylized forms were the rule.

4. El Wailly and Abu es-Soof, art. "The excavations at Tell es-Şawwān, First Preliminary Report" Sumer, XXI, (1965), p.17.



this excavation was to provide answers to several important, yet hitherto unfathomed, problems of Mesopotamian prehistory. In particular it seemed virtually certain that here at last it might be possible to reveal a village community in all its material details, including its architecture. Moreover, in view of Tell es-Şawwān's central geographical position, there was a reasonable prospect of uncovering evidence of cultural contacts between northern and southern Iraq during the sixth millenium B.C.<sup>(1)</sup> As a result of these excavations five main building levels were discovered at Tell es-Şawwān, and these were numbered I-V from the bottom upwards; the surviving height of these architectural remains does not exceed 3.5 m. in all.<sup>(2)</sup> Pottery was found in some of the levels, especially in level II; level I furnished very little pottery.<sup>(3)</sup> Thus the pottery sequence confirms the architectural evidence that the site of Tell es-Şawwān was occupied from beginning to end, without any significant interruptions; there was no vigorous invasion.<sup>(4)</sup>

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1. El-Wailly and Abu es-Soof, op.cit., p.17.

2. Ibid., p.19.

3. As they mention in the first preliminary report of 1964, Sumer, XXI, p.21, that in level III the incised Hassuna ware becomes very popular and the crude archaic type disappears. Painted ware of Samarra makes its appearance in considerable quantities, and a few examples which were painted after firing were found in level IV, the incised Hassuna pottery appears for the last time, and the painted, painted and incised. Samarra ware now predominates. Very little is left of Şawwān V, but it suffices to show continuity in the pottery; Samarra wares are the only ceramic products in this level.

4. El-Wailly and Abu es-Soof, op.cit., p. 22, However, the excavation of Tell es-Şawwan constitutes the most important event in the field of Mesopotamian prehistory since the work at Hassuna and Eridu in the 1940. Among the results of the first season as the report mentions, op.cit., p.24. the

It is very clear from what I have said, that the place chosen by Mu'tašim as a site for his Capital was inhabited in the earliest times, and its inhabitants had some kind of civilization going back to a very early period of prehistory.

In the early centuries of the Christian era it was inhabited by the Persians. It was a valuable strategical centre during the struggle with the Romans, so a fort was built there called "Summer" and its name was recorded at the time of the retreat of the Roman armies, soon after the death of Julian in 363 A.D.

Iraq was then for centuries under the control of the Sasanids. This was a time of luxury, and witnessed great progress, as a result of various irrigation projects, including the

Contd. from p.5.] following are especially significant:

- 1 - The ditch of level 1 is the earliest work of its kind yet identified in Iraq, and indicates that we are dealing with a settled community capable of organised self-defence.
- 2 - The five building-levels discovered, with their regularity of plan and the elaborate techniques they display, are evidence for a degree of architectural sophistication hitherto unknown in Iraq at this early date.
- 3 - The pottery corresponds fairly closely to the standard Ḥassuna-Sāmarra repertoire known from Ḥassuna itself. The association of the two wares in levels III and IV demonstrates clearly that one gradually replaced the other with no sharp break intervening.
- 4 - The continuity of architectural and ceramic tradition through all levels at Tell es-Šawwān suggests most powerfully that there was no abrupt change of population in the area during this period.
- 5 - The carved alabaster objects found in the earliest levels excel in quality and quantity alike. Their extraordinary importance is immediately apparent, and is indeed enhanced by the fact that they raise as many questions as they answer. They were almost certainly in the locality and their discovery has cast unprecedented light on a vital aspect of the early civilisation of Iraq.

reconditioning of some of the ancient irrigation canals, and the constriction of some huge weirs.

It may be assumed that most of the ancient irrigation projects, such as that at an-Nahrawān and others of similar importance, were carried out at that time.

Some historians have suggested that the foundation of an-Nahrawān was associated with military objectives for the protection of the country from Roman invasions.

They claim that the Persians undertook the project because they felt that Iraq which was under their rule was threatened from the Western side of the Tigris since the Romans followed the road of Naṣibin or Sinjār or Armenia in their invasions of Iraq, and they could easily descend by the road through the Assyrian plains of the Eastern Tigris during suitable seasons as far as the gates of Ctesiphon.

One of the most significant projects already executed in the Persian period is known as an-Nahrawān,<sup>(1)</sup> It consisted of three principal rivers, all of them located on the east side of the Tigris and receiving their water from it. These rivers are: (Fig. 1, map No.1)

1. al-Qā'im (The summer stream of an-Nahrawān)
2. as-Ṣanam (The winter stream of an-Nahrawān)

Both diverge from the Tigris on the south side of the modern town.

3. The upper Qaṭūl of Kisra, which takes its water from the Tigris on the north of Sāmarrā.

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1. While Yāqūt in his article about an-Nahrawān in Mu'jam, IV, p.846 says: They are three Nahrawāns, the upper, the middle, and the lower.

The first one, al-Qā'im, diverges as Susa mentions<sup>(1)</sup> from the Tigris about eleven Kilometres south of Sāmarrā, at the place called "Burj al-Qā'im" [The tower of al-Qā'im] situated on the right bank of the stream and finishes near the recent city of al-Kut. (Fig. 1, map. No.1) Ross who visited this area in the year 1834 described Burj al-Qā'im as follows:<sup>(2)</sup>

"It stands on the southern bank of the Nahrawān about 200 yards from the river. It is a solid square, built of Pebbles laid in lime, and consists of twenty-four horizontal layers, each 2 spans and a quarter high, and measuring 5 paces and a half in diameter at the bottom." (Fig. 2).

The second one as-Ṣanam (the winter stream of al-Nahrawān diverges from the Tigris about six kilometres south of the junction with the al-Qā'im, and directly in front of "Ḥusn al-Qadisiya"<sup>(3)</sup> [Fort of al-Qadisiya] (Fig. 3, map No.2). The

1. R.S., 1, p.147.

2. J.R.G.S., Vol., XI, p.127. Susa mentions in R.S., 1, pp.147f "Probably the face of this building was covered by a layer of bricks some of them inscribed. This layer had been damaged or the bricks been moved for use in the building of modern Sāmarrā." The investigators disagree about the date of this building. Ross says in p.127 of J.R.G.S., XI, "It is evidently a work of remote antiquity, the natives say it was the directing-mark for boats entering this branch of the canal from the river, long before Mohammedan era." Susa believes, as he reports in R.S., 1, p.147, that the tower is very ancient, probably the original building belongs to the time when the an-Nahrawan was originally established. Afterwards it was rebuilt in the time of ar-Rashīd when he redug its stream. Al-Mutawakkil might have added to it some of the decoration.

3. Al-Qadisiya. This name was given to several places. First one that Yāqūt mentions in Mu'jam, IV, p.7. It is about 15 Farsakh (about 75 kilometres) from the Islamic city al-Kufa, and it is the place where the great battle was fought between the Muslims and Persians in the year 16 A.H./637 A.D. under the [Contd.]

place where this stream diverges from it is still known as "as-Şanam" [The idol]. This Şanam might have been erected at the head of the stream at the time that the canal was founded. Ross mentions in his report about aş-Şanam that "close to the Tigris there is a mound and part of wall called Terma and Makan el-Şanam, from whence some years ago the lower part of an immense statue of black stone, now at Baghdad in the possession of Col. Tayler, was carried away and I have no doubt that the other part of it is still buried hereabout".<sup>(1)</sup>

No doubt the location of the routes into an-Nahrawān (al-Qā'im and as-Şanam) marked a significant military position, in view of the circumstances in which an-Nahrawān was built (I mean the enmity between the Romans and the Persians).

The third one is called the upper Qaṭūl of Kisra (Fig. 1, map No.1); it was named after Kisra Anushirwān who was well-known as al-'Adel (the just) 531-579 A.D. who ordered it to be dug to irrigate the lands situated to the south of Sāmarrā.<sup>(2)</sup> Its

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Contd. from p.8] leadership of Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqās, at the time of 'Omar. The second one that Yāqūt notes in Mu'jam, IV, p.9, it is a large village between Ḥarbā and Sāmarrā where glass was manufactured. Ross, who visited the site in the year 1834 wrote about it in J.R.G.S., vol. XI, p.127, as follows: "45m.S.E. of Kaim stands the ancient Sasanian fort of Qadisiyah....an octagonal building of sun-dried bricks, each 4 inches thick and upwards of 1 foot in diameter. A large bastion stands at each angle, and seventeen smaller ones, 10 or 12 paces apart are seen in each face, where there is also a cut probably for the gates. There are scarcely sufficient marks within it to show that building ever existed there.

1. J.R.G.S., XI, p.127.

2. Mu'jam, IV, p.16.



stream begins from the north of Sāmarrā and reaches to the south.<sup>(1)</sup> Today it is known as ar-Raṣaṣī [The Leaden].

Historical evidence shows that the Arabs called it the upper Qaṭūl of Kisra in order to distinguish it from the lower Qaṭūl (al-Qā'im) which branches off at the southern part of Sāmarrā.<sup>(2)</sup>

Several important bridges were located over the Nahrawān river, the most significant being the one constructed at the City of Nahrawān,<sup>(3)</sup> which was situated about 120 kilometres to the south of the head of the Nahrawān. It is also called the "City of Nahrawān Bridge". It is mentioned by the Arab historians, for instance, it was the city of the well-known battle of Nahrawān where the Khawarij were defeated in (38 A.H./658 A.D.).<sup>(4)</sup>

The most famous bridge of those spanning the Qaṭūl of Kisra, was the historical one known today as "Qanṭarat ar-Raṣaṣī". This bridge was situated seven and a half kilometres from the head of the Qaṭūl river and was built of black basalt brick - Lead was in some way used in its construction, and for this reason people called it "The Leaden Bridge."<sup>(5)</sup>

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1. A.A.S., p.127.

2. R.S., I, p.204.

3. Nahrawān, It was as Yāqūt mentions in Mu'jam, IV, p.846, a big district between Baghdād and Wasit on the eastern bank of Tigris.

4. For details see Ṭabarī, I, pp.3365-3391; Murūj, IV, pp. 410-418; Kāmil, III, pp.273-291.

5. R.S., I, p.155.

There were some principal cities situated on the banks of the Nahrawān river, the last historical descriptions of them and of Nahrawān itself were given by the historian Suhrāb at the end of the ninth century. His description starts from the head of the Qaṭūl of Kisra: "The water flows [from the Tigris] from its eastern side of the upper Qaṭūl, its source being a short distance from Dūr al-Ḥarīth touching the palace of Mutawakkil, known as Ja'fari. (Fig. 1, Map No.1) Spanned by a brick viaduct then it passes to al-Itakhiyah where a Kisrahwiah viaduct crosses it. It then flows to al-Muḥammadiyah where a pontoon bridge was found, and goes on to the large village of al-Ajamah, then on to al-Shadhurān, then to al-Ma'muniah (another large village) then to al-Qanaṭir [The Viaducts]. All these villages were densely populated and had a continuous stretch of plantation. After this, the river reached the villages of Ṣūlī and Ba'qubā and was known in this area as Tamurra. It then flowed to Bajisra, after that passed under a bridge known as Nahrawān Bridge. Here the river was called Nahrawān. From here it went to the upper Shadhurān then to Burān Bridge, then to Iskaf Banī al-Junaied, this was a town cut in two by the river, then it passed along a stretch of villages and extended plantations until it flowed into the short distance from Madharaya<sup>(1)</sup> on the Eastern side".<sup>(2)</sup>

Among the architectural works executed on the ancient site of Sāmarrā, before the rule of Mu'taṣim was the project of ar-Rashīd. This was mentioned by Arab historians who recorded

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1. Madharaya, as Yāqūt mentions in Mu'jam, IV, p.38, was a village situated above Wasīṭ.

2. A.A.S., pp.127f.

the fact that Mu'taṣim chose the region of Sāmarrā for his capital.

Balādhuri records that the "Caliph al-Mu'taṣim bi-llāh made his residence there and then left it for al-Qaṭūl where he occupied the palace of ar-Rashīd, built at the time when ar-Rashīd had Qaṭulah [canal] dug and called it abū-l-jund [The father of the army] because the land watered by it produced enough provisions for the army".<sup>(1)</sup> (Fig. 1, Map No.1)

The al-Qaṭūl, as Yāqūt reports,<sup>(2)</sup> existed before the construction of Sāmarrā. Ar-Rashīd was the first to have this canal dug and built at its mouth a palace called abū-l-jund. According to Suhrāb,<sup>(3)</sup> the Qaṭūl took its water from the Tigris to the south of Sāmarrā within a limited area between Maṭira and Barkuwara. Suhrāb mentions this river during his discourse on the three Qaṭūls which take their water from the Tigris south of Sāmarrā. He says: "The third one is known as abū-l-jund. It is the lowest, the most important, and the most populous. It passes among plantations and villages and some streams diverge from it which water the plantations situated along the eastern bank of the Tigris. Most of them flow into the Tigris which then reaches Ṭaffār where it is crossed by a bridge. It then passes in the Qaṭūl of Kisra four Farsakh (about 20 kilometres) above Salwa."<sup>(4)</sup>

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1. Futūh., p.460.

2. Mu'jam., IV, p.16.

3. A.A.S., p.128; Yāqūt in Mu'jam, IV, p.16 agree that this Qaṭūl was situated lower than the Qaṭūl of Kisra which was dug by Kisra Anushirwān.

4. A.A.S., p.128.



It is obvious from records both of Balādhuri and Yāqūt,<sup>(1)</sup> that ar-Rashīd was the first to have the river dug, although ibn 'Abd al-Ḥaqq records that Qaṭūl was a canal in the region of Sāmarrā before ar-Rashīd had it dug and it became thickly populated.<sup>(2)</sup> Susa is much in favour of the idea of ibn 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, that the canal had been in existence before the reign of ar-Rashīd, and that he had it redug. Susa supports his view by showing that nowadays the trace of the new digging carried out by ar-Rashīd, indicates that the soil resulting from this digging was located on the right side of the river several metres from the original bank. These layers of soil created a range of high mounds extending parallel with the original bank of the canal.<sup>(3)</sup>

According to both Ṭabarī,<sup>(4)</sup> and ibn Athīr,<sup>(5)</sup> it appears that ar-Rashīd did not build only a palace, but his aim was to build also a city in al-Qaṭūl, and they relate that Masrur [The great servant] said: "Mu'taṣim asked me where was ar-Rashīd making an excursion when he complained about staying in Baghdād? I said to him, at Qaṭūl where he had built a city whose remains and wall are still standing". Ar-Rashīd's city at Qaṭūl which the two historians mentioned was not finished because ar-Rashīd had to go to Riqqa to supervise the quelling of a Syrian rebellion

1. Balādhuri saying in Futūḥ, p.460. Meanwhile his speaking about Mu'taṣim's departure to the Qaṭūl region "Caliph al-Mu'taṣim bi-llāh made his residence in it and then left it for al-Qaṭūl where he occupied the Palace ar-Rashīd which was built when ar-Rashīd dug out Qaṭulah (Canal)".

2. Marāṣid., III, p.1057.

3. R.S., I, p.235.

4. III, p. 1180.

5. Kāmil., VI, p.319.

and they record plainly that "The City of Qaṭūl remained incomplete".<sup>(1)</sup>

As for his palace in Qaṭūl Yāqūt records,<sup>(2)</sup> that it stood near a significant monument of Kisra.

It is very strange that Ya'qūbī does not make mention in his books "Buldān and Ta'rīkh"<sup>(3)</sup> of both the palace and the city of ar-Rashīd, when they had been erected by him before al-Mu'taṣim in the district of Qaṭūl. And indeed it is all the more strange when we learn that he disclaims the existence of any habitations at ancient Sāmarrā, except a Christian monastery. He relates that: "Surra-man-Ra'ā, was formerly a bare tract in the district of at Ṭirhān without buildings or cultivation. There was nothing there except a Christian monastery in the place which was later to be occupied by the Royal Palace, known as Dar al-'Ammā".

Mas'ūdī also does not mention in Murūj the buildings of ar-Rashīd in the region of Qaṭūl, but nevertheless, he says that it was in this region that "a village was inhabited by people

1. Ṭabarī, III, p.1180.

2. Mu'jam, III, p.15.

3. However, he mentions in two places of his account about Sāmarrā, the existence of two rivers, meanwhile he relates about Mu'taṣim's movement from one place to another to look for a suitable place to build. He records his movement from Bāḥashmā to Maṭira, he says: "he moved on, therefore, to the village named al-Maṭira where he remained for some time. Afterwards he went to al-Qaṭūl. He said: This is the best place. Let the Canal called al-Qaṭūl pass through the middle of the town and the buildings be along the Tigris and al-Qaṭūl." And he says about Mutawakkil's decision to build at Maḥuza "He was told that already, in days gone by al-Mu'taṣim had had an idea of building a town and digging out a canal there, which had existed in ancient times." See Buldān, pp.31f and p.41.

from Jaramiqa<sup>9</sup> (1) and a people of Nabathaens on the river known as Qaṭūl." (2) In his book "al-Tanbīh wa-al-Ishrāf" (3) he makes it clear that the palace of ar-Rashīd existed there when he speaks about Mu'taṣim's movement to Sāmarrā, and in this respect he says: "He stayed there at a palace belonging to ar-Rashīd". If we ask ourselves where was the palace founded by ar-Rashīd situated and where was the city which some of the historians mention that ar-Rashīd started to build but did not complete? It becomes apparent that it is very difficult to answer. Nor is it possible to state where exactly the site of ancient Sāmarrā stood, because the district has not yet been scientifically studied, in spite of the valuable contribution made by Professor Herzfeld and the German expedition in the ancient Sāmarrā district. Herzfeld's work was connected with buildings and ancient monuments still standing, with the styles of embellishments used to decorate these monuments, such as, sculptures, paintings, stucco, and so forth. But the study of the area, from the geographical point of view, and with regard to the history of the district at the different historical periods or with the history of the canal which water this area did not receive any great attention.

The same criticism may be levelled at Professor Creswell in spite of the very close attention he gave to the Islamic Architecture at Sāmarrā. Likewise this applies to the activities of the Directorate General of Antiquities of Iraq. Susa's book

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1. Jaramiqa. People called after Jarmāq. It is as Yāqūt says in Mu'jam, II, p.64, a town in Fars. Iṣṭakhrī says in Masalik wa'l-mamalik p.229, it is situated in the way between Aṣbahan and Nishabur.

2. VII, p.119.

3. p.356.

was written by an irrigation expert and provides a significant contribution to the study of the geography of ancient Sāmarrā.

The location of the palace and city of ar-Rashīd thus presents a problem. Susa is inclined to believe that both were situated at the place known as "al-Musharaḥāt" which is on the North-east of al-Qadisiyya wall about six kilometres along the left bank of Abū-l-Jund. (Fig. 1, map no.1) His evidence was that, nowhere else in that area was there anything remaining which could correspond to the description given by the historians of the palace and the city, and established by them on the Qaṭūl's bank [recently known as al-Qā'im]. It is noticeable that when the historians describe the site of ar-Rashīd's palace, they do not mention the existence of the Tigris, while they relate that the palace built by Mu'taṣim and the city he founded on the Qaṭūl commanded a view of the Tigris. This might indicate that both the city and the palace of ar-Rashīd were far away from the Tigris, and this exactly corresponds with the site of Musharaḥat.

It may also be noticed that when the river Abū-l-Jund (Qā'im) was redug by ar-Rashīd, the order was given to place all the soil taken out of the river-bed, on the right bank, which might indicate that his desire was to assure that his palace and city commanded a view of the river. By placing all the soil on the bank on which he had built his city and palace, high mounds would obscure the view of the river from the palace and the city.<sup>(1)</sup>

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1. R.S., I, pp.239f.

However, what may indicate that ar-Rashīd's palace was populated by the time of Mu'taṣim, is that Mu'taṣim started to add to it and it was granted to Ashnās.<sup>(1)</sup>

The palace remained unfinished during Mu'taṣim's rule and in Mutawakkil's reign a new palace was built, and the famous pool known as Ja'fariya was founded. In this area were attractive small cities, villages and monasteries, some of which were mentioned by the Muslim historians in their records about Sāmarrā.

One of these places, was known as "Karkh"<sup>(2)</sup> and because there are many places having the same name, the historians named it "Karkh of Sāmarrā" to distinguish it from other places. Yāqūt mentions that it was the site of an ancient city which stood on high ground known as "Karkh Fairuz" [called after the King Fairuz ibn Bilāsh ibn Qubadh]. This city was older than Sāmarrā, but when Sāmarrā was built it was attached to it. During the rule of Mu'taṣim, Turks known as Shibliya dwelled in it, and in this district was the palace of Ashnās The Turk.<sup>(3)</sup>

1. See Mu'jam, III, p.16, and IV, p.16.

2. Al-Karkh. There are other places having the same name, such as Karkh of Bajadda, Karkh of al-Baṣra, Karkh of Khuzistan, Karkh of Baghdad, Karkh of Juddan, and Karkh of Sāmarrā. [See Yāqūt, Mu'jam, IV, pp. 252-251]. The word Karkh as Yāqūt says in Mu'jam, IV, p.252, is not originally Arabic, but a Nabathaens word, and there are some who believe that it is an Amamenian word which means [The well fortified city].

3. Mu'jam, IV, p.256. Yāqūt also mentions in the same place that in his time Karkh of Sāmarrā was still populous, Sāmarrā was then destroyed. Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥaqqin Marāsid, II, p.487, who wrote his book after Yāqūt, says that some houses still stood by his time, but they were without any dwellers.

The ruins of this plot still exist and are to be seen about 10 kilometres to the north of the modern city, where a great wall five metres high still stands. It is known as "The wall of Ashnās" and consists of several mounds which appear to belong to a palace erected within the walls. Another wall similar to it situated on its north-west side is known as "The wall of Walī Shaykh". Within this wall are ruins of some buildings called "Buq'ā" [spot] where the wall called "Zankūr"<sup>(1)</sup> can be found. (Fig. 1, map no.1) Balādhurī mentions to Karkh Fairuz, while speaking about Sāmarrā, that: "al-Mu'taṣim made his freedman Ashnās, together with the other generals who had joined him [Ashnās] settle at Karkh Fairuz. Other generals were given the houses called al-'Arabāyā."<sup>(2)</sup>

It seems from what was written by the historians, that the area known as al-'Arabani, which was occupied by Mu'taṣim's leaders, was inhabited before Mu'taṣim's rule, for Yāqūt points out that a monastery known as "Dayr at-Ṭawawis" [The Monastery of Peacocks] was situated on the Karkh border. Here is what he has to say about it:<sup>(3)</sup> "It is in Sāmarrā adjoining Karkh Juddān overlooking the sunken area known as al-Buni, at the end of Karkh

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1. R.S., I, pp.57f. Susa says that if it is allowed for him to build a theory from this meaning, it is possible to say that it consisted of buildings which were occupied by the leaders families.
  2. Futūḥ., p.460.
  3. Mu'jam., II, p.675.



border joined with Dūr<sup>(1)</sup> and its buildings. This Dūr is the Dūr known as "Dūr 'Arabāya" and it is old and was a panorama known to Dhu-l-Qarnayn [Alexander the Great] or to some of the Chosroes, and afterwards the Christians used it as a monastery at the time of the Persians".

To the south of modern Sāmarrā, was the village of al-Maṭira, Yāqūt says that it was a village in the Sāmarrā district and was also considered part of Baghdād and Sāmarrā Parks,<sup>(2)</sup> and he gave an account in his Mu'jam quoted from Balādhurī which

1. Dūr as Yaqut mentions in Mu'jam., II, pp.615f, a name of seven places in Land of Iraq. They are as follows: Dūr of Tikrit, is between Sāmarrā and Tikrit. The second known as Dūr 'Arabayi, is also between Sāmarrā and Tikrit. The third one known as Dūr of Bani Auqar is about five Farsakh from Baghdād (25 kilometres). Dūr is also the name of a village near Sumaysaṭ, Dūr is also a name of a quarter in Nishapur, and the name of a village called Dūr Ḥabīb. The seventh one is a quarter on the outskirts of Baghdād near the Roman monastery known as Dūr.

It is clear from the above-mentioned that in the region of Sāmarrā, there are three places known as "Dūr" - the first one called Dūr of Tikrit situated between Sāmarrā and Tikrit. Yāqūt also mentions in Mu'jam, IV, p.947 under the article of "Haṭari" that it is situated south of the village of Haṭari which was south of Tikrit and he named it as the upper Dūr known as al-Khirba. It is called by ibn Ḥawqal in Masālik wa-'l-mamalik, p.166 as "Dūr al-Kharb" 20 kilometres north of Dūr al-'Arabayi, Suhraḥ called it as Dūr al-Ḥarith, p.127, but Yāqūt named it as Dūr Sāmarrā. The second one known as Dūr 'Arabaya was, as Yāqūt says, old and served as a watch-tower for Alexander, or for some of the Chosroes. Then the Christians, at the time of the Persians, used it as a monastery. The third one, Dūr Bani Auqar, was situated, as Yāqūbi informs us, as five Faraskh (25 kilometres) to the north of Baghdād.

2. Mu'jam., IV, p.568, while ibn 'Abd al-Ḥaqq says in Marāsīd, Maṭira was a village of Sāmarrā district and was one of its Parks.

makes it clear that Maṭira had been founded before Mu'taṣim, so he says: "Maṭira Church was newly created and had been built by the time of Ma'mun. It was attributed to Maṭar bin Fizara as-Shaybani. It became Maṭariya, but was later changed to Maṭira."<sup>(1)</sup> (Fig. 1, Map. No.1)

It is very difficult for us to fix precisely the position of Maṭira village, for there are many ruins in this area. It would, however, be possible to know its situation, if we knew exactly the position of al-Afshin palace, which according to historical evidence had been built in the Maṭira area. But there are many ruins in the southern part of Sāmarrā, which make the identifying of this palace impossible. And if we are seeking the help of historical evidence to limit the site of Maṭira, we find that Ya'qūbī points out that: "Mu'taṣim granted a plot of land to al-Afshin Kaidhar bin Ka'ūs al-Urushani at the end of the building of the town about two Farsakh (10 kilometres) to the east and named the palace al-Maṭira."<sup>(1)</sup>

He also records that: "Mutawakkil had his son Ibrāhīm al-Mu'aiyed reside in al-Maṭira to the east at the place called Balkuwārā,<sup>(2)</sup> where the site of Balkuwārā palace was confined to the place called Manqūr in the extreme south."<sup>(3)</sup> Because

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1. Mu'jam., IV, p.568; Shabushtī records in his book "ad-Dayyārāt" p.96, a report which shows that Maṭira was situated about two Farsakh (10 kilometres) from the south of Surra-man-ra'a, he says "...between Qadisiya and Surra-man-Ra'a four Farsakh, al-Maṭira is in between.

2. Buldān, p. 265.

3. D.A.I., Sāmarrā, p.68.



Maṭīra is situated between Sāmarrā and Balkuwārā, our investigation should be concentrated in the areas to the north of Balkuwārā. Susa records that it is possible that the situation of Maṭīra might be in the recent site known as "Sur al-Jebertiya" by inferring that there is no building there more populous than it is.<sup>(1)</sup>

It appears that the area of Maṭīra was famous and its features made it an agreeable place. This was supported by Qazwīnī who says about it: "Of all the Sāmarrā villages the most similar to Paradise was Maṭīra, because of its pleasantness of climate, sweetness of water, goodness of soil and the mass of aromatic plants."<sup>(2)</sup>

For these reasons, Mu'taṣim firstly granted it to his favourite leader al-Afshīn, who built in it a palace for himself. Ya'qūbī records that: "Ḥasan ibn Sahl asked to be granted a piece of ground between the extremity of the markets, which ended at the hill on which later the gibbet of Bābak was to be found and al-Maṭīra, the place of the piece of land granted to al-Afshīn. At that time there were no inhabitants in the place, but afterwards it was so surrounded by edifices that the granting of land to Ḥasan ibn Sahl became the centre of Surra-man-ra'ā. The buildings of the inhabitants extended in every direction and reached as far as al-Maṭīra."<sup>(3)</sup>

1. R.S., I, p.60.

2. A.B.A.I., p.461.

3. Buldān, p.34.

When al-Afshīn died, his allotment and palace were granted by Mu'taṣim to Wāṣif, and in this respect Ya'qūbī says: "He allotted the house of al-Afshīn which was in al-Maṭira to Wāṣif, and Wāṣif moved from his former house into that of al-Afshīn, and made it his abode thenceforth, and his companions and men were round about him."<sup>(1)</sup>

Maṭira and the Palace of Afshīn have been mentioned by the historian's accounts as regards the captivity of Bābak, thus both Ṭabarī and ibn Athīr<sup>(2)</sup> recorded in the events of the year 223H. that when Afshin arrived with Bābak at Maṭira they spent the night in the palace of al-Afshīn, where Mu'taṣim went in the evening to see him.<sup>(3)</sup> And on the next day Bābak, sitting on an elephant, was the object of public scorn all the way from Maṭira to Dar al- 'Ammā (Government House) where he was shown to Mu'taṣim.

Historical evidence shows clearly that there were some Christian monasteries established in the district of Sāmarrā, especially in the southern area, where there was one called "Dayr as-Susi" [The Monastery of as-Susi] Shabushtī says that

1. Ibid., p. 37.

2. Ṭabarī, III, p.1229; Kāmil, VI, pp. 337f; while Mas'ūdī mentions in Muruj, VII, p. 127, that Afshin made the residence of Bābak on the place known as Qaṭūl about 5 Fersakh (25 Kilometres) from Sāmarrā.

3. Ṭabarī states, III, p.1230, Mu'taṣim - could not resist the desire to see Bābak, so he went to Maṭira and entered the palace wearing a mask.

it was: "a pleasant place on the banks of the Tigris at Qadisiya in Surra-man-ra'ā was four Farsakh (20 kilometres), al-Maṭira was situated between them. All these places were considered as Parks and Gardens full of grapes. The people attended this monastery to drink in its gardens."<sup>(1)</sup>

It is evident that this monastery existed in Sāmarrā before Sāmarrā was built by Mu'taṣim. For Yāqūt related by citing from Balādhurī that it was "the monastery of Mariam built by a man from as-Sus. It was inhabited by him and some monks. It was called after him, and was in Surra-man ra'ā, on the Western bank."<sup>(2)</sup>

This was confirmed by al-'Umarī who says about the monastery: "It is on the Western bank of Surra-man ra'ā, Mu'taṣim purchased its land from the owners."<sup>(3)</sup>

Another monastery called "Dayr Mār mar"<sup>(4)</sup> was in Southern Sāmarrā. Shabushtī says that: "This monastery was in Surra-man ra'ā at the viaduct of Wāṣif. It was a well populated monastery having a lot of monks and was surrounded by grapevine and trees."<sup>(5)</sup>

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1. Ad-Dayyārāt, p. 96.

2. Mu'jam, II, p.672; Marāṣid., I, p.433.

3. M.A.M.A., p. 262.

4. The name was given by Yāqūt in Mu'jam, II, p.700 as [The monastery of Mar Marī] a footnote was written in the book ad-Dayyārāt by 'Awwad, p.104, about Marī after whom the monastery was called. Marī was an oldest of the Eastern Prelate, the latter made his residence in Seljukia, and he built a church at Dayr Qunna near Madaien where he died in 82 A.D.

5. Ad-Dayyārāt, p.104, Yāqūt says in Mu'jam, II, p.700, the same as what Shabushtī has said.

Another monastery known as "Dayr Mar Jurjis" is mentioned by Yāqūt. This stood about 15 kilometres north of Balad.<sup>(1)</sup> In addition two accounts are given by him describing another two monasteries in Maṭira, the first one was known as Dayr Masar Jabīs situated in the suburbs of Maṭira.<sup>(2)</sup>

There is another monastery in the district of Maṭira known as "Dayr 'Abdūn". Yāqūt<sup>(3)</sup> records that "it is at Sāmarrā near Maṭira and it was named as Dayr 'Abdūn, because, 'Abdun, brother of Ṣa'īd ibn Makhlād used to visit it and to stay there on many occasions. So it was called after him. 'Abdūn was a Christian, but his brother Ṣa'īd became a Muslim by the time of al-Muwaffaq who appointed him as his minister.

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1. Mu'jam., II, p. 698.

2. Ibid., p. 699; ibn 'Abd al-Ḥaqqin Marāṣid called it as Dayr Masirjis.

3. Mu'jam., II, p.678, 'Amr bin Mata mentioned in the Patriachs of the East Chair p.75 that 'Abdun was a magnate of the Christians in IRAQ at that time.

C H A P T E R     I I

AL-MU‘TAŞIM AND SĀMARRĀ

## A - HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION TO THE 'ABBĀSID PERIOD

Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr<sup>(1)</sup> built "The Round City" which remained the capital of the 'Abbāsid state from its foundation on the year 145 A.H./762 A.D.<sup>(2)</sup> He lived in it till his death in 158 A.H./774 A.D.

His son al-Mahdī<sup>(3)</sup> succeeded him as Caliphate. He in his turn was succeeded by his own son al-Hādī<sup>(4)</sup> both of them continued to live in the capital.

1. Al-Manṣūr became Caliph in the year 136 A.H./753 A.D. after the death of his brother Abū-l- 'Abbas (also called as-Safaḥ) was considered to be one of the greatest 'Abbāsid Caliphs, for he had already established the 'Abbāsid state. He conquered all who had risen up against the 'Abbāsid state at the time of his rule. He was the founder of Baghdad which has taken his name "The Round City of al-Manṣūr". He died in the year 158 A.H./774 A.D. when he was on Pilgrimage, and he was buried in a place known as "Bir Maymun". See Ṭabarī, III, pp.88-451; Murūj, VI, pp.156-223.
- 775 2. Futūḥ p.293; But Ya'qūbī gives two different dates in his book "Ta'rikh" II, p.449. He mentions the year 144 A.H./761 A.D. while he mentions in "Buldān" p.238 to the year 140. Ṭabarī related, VI, pp.236-238 four reports, one of them mentions that the work was begun in year 144 A.H./761 A.D. the other mentions the year 145 A.H./762 A.D. Mas'ūdī related in Tanbīh, p.341, the year 145 A.H. Muqdisī in Aḥsan at-Taḡāsīm, p.121, confirm the date of building as the year 145 A.H./762 A.D. In his Ta'rikh Baghdad I, pp.66-69, al-Khatib twice mentions the year of foundation as 145 and elsewhere he says it was after 144 A.H./761 A.D., However, Dīnawarī in his book Kitab al-Akḥbār at-ṭiwāl, p.379, gives the year as 139 A.H. But this is far too early.
3. al-Mahdī, son of al-Manṣūr, became caliph in the year 158 A.H./774 A.D. after the death of his father. He died in the year 169 A.H./785 A.D. at the small village of Masabdhān. See Ṭabarī, III, pp.451-544; and Murūj, VI, pp.224-260.
4. Al-Hādī, became a caliph after the death of his father al-Mahdī. He died in 'Aysabadh in the year 170 A.H./786 A.D. See Ṭabarī, III, pp.544-569 and Murūj, VI, pp.261-287.

When Hārūn ar-Rashīd became a caliph in the year 170 A.H./786 A.D.,<sup>(1)</sup> he preferred to live in the Qaṣir of al-Khuld,<sup>(2)</sup> which lies on the bank of the Tigris river outside the Round City. He also lived for a time in Raqqā<sup>(3)</sup> in Syria.<sup>(4)</sup> In the year 193 A.H./808<sup>9</sup> A.D. while he was on his way to Khurasan to fight Rāfi'ibn al-Layth<sup>(5)</sup> he died at Tūs.<sup>(6)</sup> However, he had already appointed both of his sons al-Amīn and al-Mamūn as successors to the throne, and the conditions to the succession were

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1. Murūj, VI, p.287.
2. Qaṣir al-Khuld was built by al-Manṣūr, as Khaṭīb says, I, p.80, in the year 158 A.H./774 A.D. It was probably called al-Khuld from Jannat al-Khuld [Eternal Paradise] which was ibn al-Jawzi Said in Manaqib, p.12 as coming from "Sūrat al-Furqān 25, verse 16." Then al-Manṣūr lived there in the same year as Ṭabarī mentioned.
3. As Yāqūt says in Mu'jam, II, p.802, it is a famous city on the Euphrates; it is regarded as part of the Jazīra province because it lies on the Eastern bank of Euphrates. Muslims conquered it in 17 A.H./638 A.D. Sa'd ibn-Abi-Waqqāṣ who was a governor of Kufā sent lyāḍ ibn Ghanm who made agreement with them.
4. ibn aṭ-ṭaḡṭaqa, p.319.
5. As Dīnawarī reports p.387, he had risen in the dynasty of ar-Rashīd and the cause of his rise was that, Ali ibn 'Isā ibn Mahan, the governor of Khurasan treated unjustly the Arabs there, so Rafi'ibn-al-Layth revolted. Some of the people of Khurasan joined him. The number of his followers became 30,000 in Samarqand, when ar-Rashīd heard of the uprising he removed 'Alī ibn 'Isā from his post and appointed Harthamā ibn A'yān in his place. Then ar-Rashīd himself went out to Khurasan to direct the war against Rafi' and he left his son al-Amīn as governor at Baghda.
6. Dīnawarī, pp.387f; Ṭabarī, III, p.737; Murūj, VI, p.415, and VI, pp.287f; also see the sickness of ar-Rashīd which caused his death in Murūj, VI, p.356.



written and hung up at Ka'bah. <sup>(1)</sup>

When Hārūn ar-Rashīd died Ma'mun was at Merv, <sup>(2)</sup> and Amīn in Dar as-Salam (Baghdād). <sup>(3)</sup> Amīn - his name was Muḥammad ibn Hārūn - succeeded on the day on which his father died, <sup>(4)</sup> in his camp at Tus. <sup>(5)</sup>

The agreement of the brothers did not last, in the very first year disagreement arose between them, as Ṭabarī has recorded. <sup>(6)</sup>

It seems that al-Faḍl ibn ar-Rabi', the minister of Amīn, was the instigator who urged Amīn to deprive his brother Ma'mun of the succession to the throne and to appoint instead his son Mūsā. <sup>(7)</sup>

1. Dīnawarī, p.383; Ṭabarī, III, p.777; Murūj, p.326; ibn at-Ṭaḡṭaḡā, p.292. Dīnawarī adds that ar-Rashīd made an agreement that al-Amīn should stay in Baghdad and al-Ma'mun stay in Khurasān.
2. Merv as Yāqūt has written in Mu'jam, IV, p.507, is a well-known City of Khurasan. Merv means the white stone.
3. Dīnawarī, p.388; Ṭabari, III, p.764; Murūj, IV, p.416.
4. Murūj, VI, p.415.
5. Ṭabarī, III, p.764.
6. Ibid., p.765, But Ibn Athīr has mentioned in Kāmil, VI, p.156, that the disagreement between Amīn and Ma'mun began in the year 194 A.H.
7. Dīnawarī, pp.389-391; Ṭabarī, III, p.777; Kāmil, VI, p.156; ibn at-Ṭaḡṭaḡā, p.292f.

According to Ṭabarī, Amīn originally did not wish to oust his brother for he wanted to keep his promise to him.<sup>(1)</sup> But at the insistence of his minister Faql - who was afraid that Ma'mūn might be caliph after his brother - Amīn did this. Therefore he wrote to the governors of the various regions to name in the prayer his son Mūsā as successor.

Ma'mūn in relationship broke off communications with the capital and dropped Amin's name from Tiraz.<sup>(2)</sup> Relations between them became worse, Ma'mūn had the support of his mother's people - The Khurasanis.<sup>(3)</sup> Amīn in Baghdād held the reins of power and its soldiers, and before the war started, letters of peace had already passed between them,<sup>(4)</sup> but without any result. After

1. While Dīnawarī mentioned P.391 that Amīn wanted to keep Ma'mūn away from Khurasan, and called him to Baghdād in order to kill him, Mas'ūdī in Murūj, VI, pp.419f, says: "Amīn wanted to oust Ma'mūn". From these two reports it is clear that the people whom Amīn consulted did not agree with him. Dīnawarī has made it clear, p.391, that Khazim ibn Khazima said to Amīn after the latter asked him his advice concerning the abdication of his brother "Do not force your leaders and soldiers to break their promise, for they will break their promise to you" and the saying of 'Abdallah ibn Ḥazim to Amīn "O Commander of the faithful, do not be the first of the Caliphs to break his promise."
2. Ṭabarī, III, p.777; Kāmil, VI, p.156; ibn at-Ṭaqṭaqa, p.294.
3. Khurasanis, according to Khurasan, is as Yaḳūt says in his Mu'jam, II, p.409, a large area stretching from the border of Iraq to those of India, containing many provinces, such as Nishabīn, Hūrāt, Merv, Balakh, Ṭaligan, Aburid, Sarakhas, most of which countries were conquered either by force or by peaceful means in the year 31 A.H. in the days of the Caliph 'Uthmān.
4. We can see the texts of these letters in Dīnawarī, pp.390f; Ṭabarī, III, pp.784-791; Ibn at-Ṭaqṭaqa, p.293.

that, Amīn sent a big army under the leadership of 'Ali ibn 'Isā ibn Māhān. Ṭāhir ibn al-Ḥusayn<sup>(1)</sup> who lived in Merv commanded Ma'mūn's forces. After a great battle in which Ṭāhir's army was victorious. The opposing leader, 'Ali ibn 'Isā was killed during the action; it was Ma'mūn's first victory.<sup>(2)</sup>

In the year (195 A.H./810 A.D.) Amīn sent another army under the leadership of 'Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Jabala to Hamadhan.<sup>(3)</sup> Ṭāhir's succeeded again after a big fight in which the leader 'Abd-ar-Raḥman was killed.<sup>(4)</sup> After receiving the news of the death of 'Abd ar-Raḥman ibn Jabala, Ma'mūn gave orders that he himself was to be prayed for in the mosques and was to be called commander of the faithful.<sup>(5)</sup>

Some Islamic areas and cities called for the deposition of Amīn and proclaimed Ma'mūn as caliph. Among them was Da'ud ibn 'Isā - he was Amīn's governor of Mecca and Medina - who deposed Amīn and proclaimed Ma'mūn.<sup>(6)</sup>

In the year (197 A.H./812 A.D.) under the leadership of Ṭāhir ibn al-Ḥusayn, Harthama and Zubayr ibn al-Musayyab, the Army of Ma'mūn laid siege to Baghdād.<sup>(7)</sup> Amīn had not the means to resist

1. Subsequent founder of the Ṭāhirid dynasty of Khurasan.
2. Dīnawarī, pp. 391-393; Ṭabarī, III, 797; Murūj, VI, pp.421-423; Ibn aṭ-Ṭaḥṭaḥ, pp.294-296.
3. Hamadhan as Yāqūt mentions in Mu'jam, VI, p.981, "it was, as some Persian scholars have said, the great city in the mountain" Mughira ibn Shu'ba captured it in the year 24 A.H.
4. Dīnawarī, p.394; Ṭabarī, III, pp.820-829; Kāmil, VI, pp.170-172.
5. Kāmil, VI, p.177.
6. Ibid., VI, p.184.
7. Dīnawarī, p.395; Ṭabarī, III, p.868; Kāmil, VI, p.188; Ibn aṭ-Ṭaḥṭaḥ, pp.296f.

for long, therefore Ṭāhir ibn al-Ḥusayn blockaded Amīn and his family inside the palace and cut off supplies of water and food.<sup>(1)</sup> When he realised everything was lost Amīn tried to reach the east part of Baghdād, but the soldiers captured<sup>(2)</sup> and assassinated him.<sup>(3)</sup> In the year (198 A.H./813 A.D.)<sup>(4)</sup> Ṭāhir entered Baghdād and proclaimed Ma'mūn calif.<sup>(5)</sup> Ma'mūn remained in Merv until the death of his brother in year (202 A.H./817 A.D.) when he set out from Iraq.<sup>(6)</sup> He first inhabited Ruṣafāh,<sup>(7)</sup> then he moved to his palace on the bank of the Tigris,<sup>(8)</sup> and so

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1. Ṭabarī, III, p.908; Murūj, VI, pp.443-474; Kāmil, VI, p.194.
  2. Ṭabarī, III, pp.911-921; Murūj, VI, p.478.
  3. Dīnawarī, p.395; Ṭabarī, III, pp.922f; Murūj, VI, pp.481f.
  4. Dīnawarī, p.395.
  5. Ibid., pp.395f.
  6. Ṭabarī, III, p.1015; Kāmil, VI, p.245; We must mention that Ibn-Athir gives two different dates for the removal of Ma'mūn to Iraq, the first was in the year 202 A.H. the second was in the year 204 A.H./819 A.D.
  7. Ruṣafāh is as Yāqūt says in his Mu'jam, II, p.783, a name of several districts. We refer here to Ruṣafāh of Baghdād, which was founded when Maṣṣūr had built his city in the Western side of the river. He ordered his son Maḥdī to settle with his soldiers in the eastern side and set up camp. Many people followed him until the camp became as big as the city of al-Maṣṣūr. A mosque was built bigger and better than that of al-Maṣṣūr. The graves of 'Abbāsid Caliphs were in contact with it. Near these graves was the grave and the city quarter of Abu Ḥanifa.
  8. Kāmil, VI, p.253.

Baghdād remained throughout the reign of Ma'mūn the capital of the 'Abbāsīd state.

In the year (218 A.H./833 A.D.) Ma'mūn accompanied by his brother Mu'taṣim, set out for the Roman state. It seems from all the historians reports he fell ill and died by the river named al-Badhandūn,<sup>(1)</sup> in Rajab in the year 218 A.H.<sup>(2)</sup> His brother Mu'taṣim and his son 'Abbas carried him away and buried him in Ṭarsus<sup>(3)</sup> at Khaqān's house.<sup>(4)</sup> Khaqān was the servant of ar-Rashīd.

#### B - THE PERIOD OF AL-MU'TAṢIM

Mu'taṣim's name was Muḥammad ibn-Hārūn ar-Rashīd ibn al-Mahdī ibn Ja'far al-Manṣur,<sup>(5)</sup> He was generally known as Abu Is'hāq, his mother was called Mardah<sup>(6)</sup> bint Shabīb.<sup>(7)</sup>

He was proclaimed Caliph on the same day on which his brother died<sup>(8)</sup> Thursday 17th of Rajāb 218 A.H. 10th August 833.<sup>(9)</sup>

1. Badhandun, was as Yāqūt says in his Mu'jam, III, p.530, a village which was one day's walk from Ṭarsus.
2. Murūj, VII, p.101.
3. Ṭarsus was, as Yāqūt says in his Mu'jam, III, p.526, a city in Sham (Syria) lying between Anṭakia, Alps and the Roman province of Asia.
4. Ṭabarī, III, p.1140; Mas'ūdī, VII, p.101; Kāmil, VI, p.304; Ibn 'imad, Shadharat ad-Dhahab, II, p.43.
5. Murūj, VII, pp.102f; and Tanbīh, p.352; Kāmil, VI, p.373.
6. Ṭabarī, III, p.758; Tanbīh, p.352.
7. Murūj, VII, p.103.
8. *Ibid.*, VII, p.102; Tanbīh, p.352; Ibn at-Ṭaṭṭaqa, p.316; while Dīnawarī, p.396, gives an account that differs from those of all Muslim historians as to whether Ma'mūn proclaimed his son 'Abbās as successor to the throne. But when Ma'mūn died Mu'taṣim assembling leaders and soldiers called them to proclaim him Caliph.
9. Ṭabarī, III, p.1164; But Mas'ūdī in Murūj mentions that it was on Thursday, thirteen days remaining from Rajab.

Historical evidence clearly shows that Ma'mūn had actually commanded that his brother should succeed him.<sup>(1)</sup> For instance Ṭabarī related: "When the sickness of Ma'mūn got worse he called his son 'Abbās, so he came. Letters had already been sent with regard to Abū-Ishāq ibn ar-Rashīd. 'Abbās stayed several days with his brother Abū-Ishāq, some people say that he made the decree in the presence of 'Abbās, Judges, legists, leaders and writers."<sup>(2)</sup>

At first the soldiers did not accept Mu'taṣim. Some historical records show clearly that they mutinied, declaring that 'Abbās should be proclaimed caliph in succession to his father.

Mu'taṣim, however, quickly quenched the fire of rebellion by asking and receiving the consent of 'Abbās, 'Abbās himself went out to the soldiers and publicly reproved the mutineers saying "what is this dubious loyalty, I have personally agreed to my uncle's succession and delivered to him the Caliphate"<sup>(3)</sup> Therefore the

1. Ṭabarī, III, pp.1135f; then he relates in his history, III, pp.1136-1138, the text of the commandment sent by Ma'mūn to the states and provinces concerning Mu'taṣim's succession; ibn Athīr reports, VI, p.302, that when Ma'mūn fell ill he ordered letters to be sent to the states in this form "From 'Abd-Allah, and from his brother Abu Ishaq ibn Hārūn, who will be Caliph after him". Ibn Athīr goes on to say that Ma'mūn nominated Mu'taṣim in the presence of his son 'Abbās, legists, judges and leaders, after that he gives an account of the Commandment text, VI, p.302.
2. Ṭabarī, III, p.1164; Kāmil, VI, p.310; Mas'ūdī states in Murūj, VII, p.103 "There was at that time a dispute in the matter between Mu'taṣim and 'Abbās ibn Ma'mūn then 'Abbās was led to proclamation."
3. See R.T.I., pp.67f.



soldiers acquiesced. While he was still at Merv, Mu'taṣim ordered building started by Ma'mūn in Ṭawana to be pulled down, he brought back all the arms and supplies that could be carried and set fire to the remainder. The inhabitants were dispersed to their respective provinces. After that he moved to Baghdad accompanied by 'Abbās ibn Ma'mūn, he entered it in the month of Ramaḡān of year 218 A.H. <sup>(1)</sup>

#### BĀBAK'S REBELLION:

The first thing Mu'taṣim did on his arrival in Baghdād was to prepare a campaign to put down Bābak's revolt.

It appears from historical evidence, that this revolution was started at the earlier period before the rule of Mu'taṣim <sup>(2)</sup> in the district called Arran <sup>(3)</sup> and Baylaqān, <sup>(4)</sup> where he had a great following.

It is relevant here to trace the origin of Bābak and the religious movement of Khurramiyya which was his passport to power.

1. Tarikh, II, p.163; Ṭabarī, III, p.1164; Kāmil, VI, p.310; that there was contention between Mu'taṣim and 'Abbās at that time, then 'Abbās was led to his proclamation.
2. Ṭabarī, III, p.1171; Kāmil, VI, p.315; Ibn 'imad, Shadharat., II, p.2. He states that Mu'mūn in year (212 A.H. 827 A.D.) prepared army under leadership of Muḡammad ibn Ḥamid at-Ṭusī to fight Bābak, Shadharat, II, p.27, Bābak was victorious in the battle as Ibn 'Imad mentions in Shadharat, II, p.31, and Muḡammad ibn Ḥamid was killed.
3. Arran, as Yāqūt states in Mu'jam, I, p.183, a name of a big state.
4. Baylaqān, as Yāqūt states in Mu'jam, I, pp.797f, a city near ad-Darband, considered as in the great Armenia.



The movement of Khurramiyya was founded by Mazdak. After his death it was led by his wife Khurrama who helped to establish the basis of the movement and increase its following. The movement became known as Khurramiyyah after her name Khurramā. (1)

When Mu'taṣim became Caliph he sent an army led by Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf, well known as Abū Sa'īd, to Ardabil. He triumphed over Bābak. It was the first battle in which Bābak was beaten. (2)

In Jamada al-Akhira, Mu'taṣim sent out his leader Afshīn who camped in Bārazānd. (3) There was a battle between Afshīn and Bābak at Arshaq, Bābak ran away to al-Badh (4) after this battle.

In year (222 A.H. 836 A.D.) Mu'taṣim sent an army to support Afshīn, led by Ja far ibn-Dīnār al-Khayyāt. (5) Mu'taṣim gave great attention to the war against the revolt of Bābak, so he arranged the means of transport between Sāmarrā and his leader Afshīn in order to receive the news as soon as was possible.

On Friday 20th Ramaḍān year 222 A.H. 836 A.D. al-Badh, City of Bābak was opened. (6) Bābak again ran away with his family and some followers towards the mountains of Armenia, where Ashl ibn Sinbat, the ruler of Armenia had invited him and his followers to

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1. E.I./I., II, art. "Kurramiya" p.974; R.T.I., p.33.

2. Ṭabarī, III, p.1171; Kāmil., VI, p.315.

3. Ṭabarī, III, pp.1171-1173.

4. Ṭabarī, III, p.1174; al-Badh as Yāqūt states in Mu'jam., I, p.529, a district between Adhrabaijan and Arran.

5. Ṭabarī, III, pp.194f; Kāmil, VI, p.325.

6. Ṭabarī, III, p.1197; for details see Ṭabarī, III, pp.197-1228; Kāmil, VI, p.326.

the Castle, where he first held him and sent him to Afshīn, who wrote to Mu'taṣim telling that they had captured Bābak and his brother. Mu'taṣim ordered him to bring them to Sāmarrā. <sup>(1)</sup>

The victorious leader, Afshīn arrived at Sāmarrā on third Safār year (223 A.H./837 A.D.) <sup>(2)</sup> along with Bābak and his brother, while Afshīn was making his triumphal journey from Barazand to Sāmarrā. Mu'taṣim sent him a horse and a gift every day. <sup>(3)</sup>

Hārūn, son of Mu'taṣim and Mu'taṣim's family were waiting for Afshīn and his army. When Afshīn reached Sāmarrā he took his prisoner Bābak with him to his palace at Maṭira. <sup>(4)</sup>

Ṭabarī states, Mu'taṣim could not resist the desire of seeing Bābak, so he went to Maṭira and entered the palace wearing a mask.

On the next day, Bābak sitting on an elephant was the object of public scorn all the way to Dar al-'Ammā [Government House] where he was shown to Mu'taṣim. There he was savagely killed and beheaded. <sup>(6)</sup> His brother 'Abdallah was similarly treated by

1. Ṭabarī., III, p.1226; Murūj., VII, pp.124-126.

2. Ṭabarī., III, pp.1229-1233; Kāmil., VI, p.337.

3. Ibid., p.1229., Ibid., VI, p.337.

4. Ibid., Ibid., pp.337f.

5. Ṭabarī., III, p.1230., Murūj., VII, p.131 mentions that Bābak was hanged on a longwood.

6. Ṭabarī., pp.1230f., Kāmil., VI, pp.237f.

Iṣḥāq ibn Ibrāhīm, the governor of Baghdād.<sup>(1)</sup> Bābak's body was tied to a plank of wood in a spot since famous in Sāmarrā as Khashabāt Bābak.<sup>(2)</sup> Mu'taṣim met Afshīn with more respect with great poems and ceremony granted him 20 million dirhams, of which he could keep half and give the other half to his army.<sup>(3)</sup>

#### MUḤAMMAD IBN-AL-QĀSIM

In the year (219 A.H./834 A.D.) Muḥammad ibn al-Qāsim started a revolt in Khurasan, calling the Muslims to establish an 'Alid Caliphate in place of an 'Abbāsīd one. A great number of people joined him. Mu'taṣim ordered the governor of Khurasan, 'Abdallah ibn Ṭāhir, to suppress this revolution, there were several battles between them in the district of Ṭaligān and its mountains. After these battles Muḥammad fled to Nisā, where he was arrested by its governor and sent to 'Abdallāh ibn Ṭāhir who in turn sent him to Mu'taṣim.<sup>(4)</sup>

#### AMORIUM ('AMMURIYAH)

In the year (223 A.H./837 A.D.) Emperor Theophilos attacked Zepeṭra<sup>(5)</sup> and captured<sup>vt</sup> and treated people cruelly. Then he left

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1. Ṭabarī, III, p.1231; Kāmil, VI, p.338.
  2. Ibid., pp.1230f; Murūj., VII, p.131; Kāmil., VI, pp.237f; and see R.T.I., p.93.
  3. Ṭabarī, III, p.1233; Kāmil, VI, p.338.
  4. Ṭabarī, III, pp.1165f; Kāmil, VI, p.312.
  5. Zepeṭra, as Yāqūt says in Mu'jam, II, pp.914f, a city between Malaṭya and Sumaysaṭ.

for Malaṭya<sup>(1)</sup> attacking its inhabitants and some Islamic castles, capturing the women and committing terrible atrocities on his captives, putting out their eyes and cutting ears.<sup>(2)</sup>

The reason of this attack as some of the historical records explain it,<sup>(3)</sup> was that, while Bābak was being hard pressed by Afshīn, Bābak wrote to Byzantine Emperor telling him "The Arab King has used up all his armoury and his possessions with nothing left in store. He even armed his tailor (meaning Ja'far ibn Dīnār) and his cook (meaning Itakh) and sent them to fight for him."<sup>(4)</sup>

Ṭabarī sensibly concludes that Bābak's object was to relieve some of the pressure on him and divide the force of Mu'taṣim by opening a new front.<sup>(5)</sup>

When the news of this attack reached Sāmarrā, Mu'taṣim became angry, so he quickly sent 'Ujayf ibn 'Anbasa, 'Umar al-Farghani and Muḥammad Kuta with another leader to help the town, but they found the Byzantine Emperor had left and returned to his country. They stayed for a short time, while some of its

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1. Malaṭya as Yāqūt says in Mu'jam, IV, p.634, it was founded by Alexander neighbouring Syria. Maṣṣur sent in the year (140 A.H./757 A.D.) Ābd-al-Wahhāb to build it. He stayed at Malaṭya one year until he erected it.
  2. Ta'rikh, II, p.164; Ṭabarī, III, p.1234; Murūj, VII, p.133; Kāmil, VI, p.339; Ibn Ṭaḡṭaqa, pp.316f.
  3. Ṭabarī, III, p.1235; Murūj, VII, p.133; Kāmil, VI, p.339.
  4. Ṭabarī, p.1234; Kāmil, VI, p.339; R.T.I., p.104.
  5. Ṭabarī, p.1235; Murūj, VII, p.133; Kāmil, VI, p.339.

citizens, who had run away, came back again.<sup>(1)</sup>

In the year (223<sup>(2)</sup> A.H./837 A.D.) when Mu'taṣim had already crushed Bābak's movement, he summoned his Generals and Councillors to the Government House for urgent consultation and called all Muslims to the colours to fight against the Byzantine aggression. He also sent for the judges and members of the judiciary of Baghdād.<sup>(3)</sup> Historical evidence reveals that he prepared a well-equipped army; never before had a Caliph made such great preparations.

He moved out of Sāmarrā and camped on the western bank of the Tigris. He arranged his army in the traditional manner of the Islamic armies - the vanguard led by Ashnas, the rear led by Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm, right wing led by Itakh, left wing led by Ja'far ibn Dīnār al-Khayat, and the centre led by 'Ujayf ibn 'Anbasā,<sup>(4)</sup> and during the advance towards Angora, Mu'taṣim arranged his forces into three armies. The first one under the leadership of Afshīn and the second under the leadership of Ashnas, and the third one under his own leadership. These three armies were to make their separate ways to Angora, but the people of

1. Ṭabarī, III, pp.1235f; Kāmil, VI, p.340.

2. But Ṭabarī, III, p.1236 and Ibn Athīr in Kāmil, VI, p.339 mentions that Mu'taṣim went out to fight the Byzantine in the year 223. Nevertheless both of them declare that some one else said that it was either in year (222 A.H./836 A.D.) or (224 A.H./838 A.D.).

3. Ṭabarī, III, p.1235; R.T.I., p.107.

4. Ibid., pp.1236f; Murūj, VII, p.135.

Angora left their city when they heard of the approach of Mu'taṣim's armies, so the city fell without much resistance, and only Afshīn met with opposition on his way to the city. The three armies rested for a few days in Angora, after that they marched towards Amorium led by Mu'taṣim, Afshīn and Ashnās.

Thus the three armies made their concerted advance towards Amorium which was seven stages away from Angora, burning and destroying all before them until they reached Amorium. Ashnās was the first to reach the city, followed by Mu'taṣim and then Afshīn. Mu'taṣim arranged them round the enclosure.<sup>(1)</sup> After a prolonged siege the Muslims finally succeeded in entering the city through a breach which they had made in the wall. Yaṭs the leader of Amorium was arrested.<sup>(2)</sup>

Mu'taṣim ordered the city to be pulled down and set on fire. After staying in Amorium for fifty-five days he left for Tarsus.<sup>(3)</sup>

While Mu'taṣim was still enjoying his victory, he discovered a plot instigated by his nephew, 'Abbās and the leaders, the object of this plot was to kill Mu'taṣim and to appoint 'Abbās ibn Ma'mūn as a caliph of all Muslims.

The story of this plot in short as Ṭabarī states: "When Mu'taṣim sent 'Ujayf ibn 'Anbasa to the Byzantines, he did not invest him with full power as he did with Afshīn, as a result of

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1. Ṭabarī, III, pp.1236f; Murūj., VII, p.135.

2. For details see Ṭabarī, III, pp.1234-1256; Murūj; VII, pp.133-137; Kāmil, VI, pp.339-343.

3. Kāmil, VI, p.345.



this, 'Ujayf bore a grudge against Mu'taṣim, and he persuaded 'Abbās to eliminate Mu'taṣim, so they began to contact a great number of leaders. They directed some of their followers to murder Mu'taṣim and his great Turkish leaders such as Ashnās, Itakh, Bugha and others."<sup>(1)</sup>

But the conspirators were discovered and among them being 'Abbās ibn Ma'mūn, who confessed in the presence of Mu'taṣim. After that Mu'taṣim gave him to Afshīn who put him in a prison where he died.<sup>(2)</sup>

#### MAZIYAR IBN QARIN

In the year (224 A.H./838 A.D.) another revolutionary led a new uprising against the rule of Mu'taṣim. He was called Maziyar ibn Qarin in Ṭabaristan.<sup>(3)</sup>

Maziyar was one of the princes of Ṭabaristan, he was appointed Walī over Ṭabaristan by Ma'mūn who gave him the name of "Mawla" (The Client) of the commander of the faithful" as his title under which he corresponded with Ma'mūn and Mu'taṣim.<sup>(4)</sup>

1. Ṭabarī, III, pp.1256f.

2. Ibid., pp.1260f; Ṭabarī states that all the leaders were killed. For details read the story of each leader in Ṭabarī, III, pp.1264-1267 and Kāmil, VI, pp.346-350.

3. Ṭabaristan, as Yāqūt mentions in Mu'jam, III, p.502, it is a large district including this name, most of this district are mountains, some of it is country. Dahustan, Jurjān, *Astambad*, Amul, Sarriya, Shaloo.

4. R.T.I., p.113.



Maziyar who was not loyal to the Calif was first appointed by Ma'mūn, and then retained by Mu'taṣim because there was really no alternative and tolerated because both Califs were too busy with campaigns in other parts of the Empire. (1)

Some historical evidence declares that Afshīn was in contact with him by writing letters calling on him to revolt, as a result of this, Maziyar led the uprising against Mu'taṣim, and soon after he gained control of the mountains of Ṭabaristan. (2)

When the news of this uprising reached 'Abdallah ibn Ṭāhir and Mu'taṣim, both of them sent an army. 'Abdallah dispatched an army under the command of his uncle, al-Ḥassan ibn Ḥusayn ibn Muṣ'āb, and they reinforced him with 4,000 men led by Ḥayān ibn Jable. Mu'taṣim also sent an army commanded by Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Muṣ'āb. (3)

Several battles were fought between both Mu'taṣim and 'Abdallah armies, and Maziyar followers. Mu'taṣim's armies were victorious. (4)

Maziyar was captured. 'Abdallah ibn Ṭāhir, sent him to Isḥaq ibn Ibrāhīm, the Governor of Baghdād, with some letters. Historical sources state that they were sent by Afshīn to Maziyar instigating Maziyar to revolt against the Calif.

1. Futūḥ., pp.339f; I.F., p.309; R.T.I., p.113.

2. Ṭabarī, III, p.1269; Murūj., VII, p.138; Kāmil, VI, p.351.

3. Ibid., III, pp.1275f; ibid., VII, p.138; Mu'jam., III, p.506.

4. For details see Ṭabarī, III, pp.1284-1298; Murūj., VII, p.137.

Mu'tasim was ordered to arrest Afshin before the arrival of Mazyar. It appears from the historical records that Mazyar confesses that Afshin was in contact with him, and enticed him to fight against the 'Abbāsid Caliph. (1)

The public trial was held in Government House in Sāmarrā and in the presence of the Governors and Afshin. The purpose of the trial was to confirm the part played by Afshin in the revolt. Mazyar died in (225 A.H./839 A.D.) after receiving 450 lashes from the public "whip". His body was hanged beside that of Bābak. (2)

All the historians agree that Mu'tasim's death was in the year (227 A.H./841 A.D.), but they do not mention an exact date. Mas'ūdī records that his death was on 19th of Rabi' al-Awal, while Ya'qūbī, Ṭabarī and ibn Athīr mention the date 18th of the same month. (3) However, he was buried in the palace of Jawsaq al-Khāqānī, where he used to live. (4)

#### WHY AL-MU'TASIM MOVED FROM BAGHDĀD ?

It appears from various historical references that Mu'tasim started building the city of Sāmarrā in year (220 H./737 A.D.) According to Dīnawarī, who died in (282 H./895 A.D.)

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1. Ṭabarī, III, p.1303; Murūj., VII, p.138; Kāmil., VI, pp.362f.
  2. Ṭabarī, III, p.1298; Murūj., VII, p.138; Kāmil., VI, p.363; Mu'jam., III, p.506; R.T.I., p.116.
  3. Buldān., p.39; Tarikh., II, p.168; Ṭabarī., III, p.1322., Murūj., VII, p.103 and Tanbīh., p.354; Kāmil., VI, p.373;
  4. Murūj., VII, p.103.

Mu'taṣim came to Baghdād in the year (218 H./838 A.D.) and there he resided for two years. He then moved with his Turkish troops to Sāmarrā, which he built up, making it his home and military headquarters.<sup>(1)</sup>

Ya'qūbī gives two different dates, for he says in "Buldān" that Mu'taṣim went from Ṭarsus to Baghdād in the year in which he was proclaimed, namely in the year (218 H./833 A.D.). At first he occupied Mu'taṣim's house, but he had a house built on the east side of Baghdād to which he moved and there he resided during the years (218-21 H./836 A.D.)<sup>(2)</sup> But he says in his "Ta'rikh" that Mu'taṣim went out to al-Qaṭūl in the middle of Dhū-l-~~al~~-Ḥijja in the year (220 H./835 A.D.) and planned the site of the city which he built.<sup>(3)</sup>

Mas'ūdī, similarly to Ya'qūbī, gives two different dates. In his book "Tanbīh", stating that Mu'taṣim departed from Qaṭūl at the end of the year (220 H./835 A.D.),<sup>(4)</sup> while in "Murūj" he says that the work at Sāmarrā was begun in the year (221 H./836 A.D.)<sup>(5)</sup>

Ṭabarī, ibn Athīr agree that the departure of Mu'taṣim to Qaṭūl was in year (220 H.)<sup>(6)</sup>

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1. Al-Akhbār at-Ṭiwāl, p.396.

2. p.255.

3. II, p.164.

4. P. 356.

5. VII, p.123.

6. Ṭabarī, III, p.1180, Kāmil, VI, p.319.

When Mu'taṣim arrived in Baghdād from Ṭarsus, he stayed at first in Ma'mūn's house on the west side of Baghdād. Then he transferred his household to a new house which was built for him on the east side of Baghdād.<sup>(1)</sup> Arabic references do not mention or describe this palace.<sup>(2)</sup>

It seems that there were several reasons why Mu'taṣim preferred not to stay in Baghdād; I shall discuss them later on in this chapter. The Arabic sources declare that the principal factor for his move was the bad behaviour of his Turkish soldiers with regard to the inhabitants of Baghdād.<sup>(3)</sup>

These Turks were a new addition of the army which appeared during Mu'taṣim's reign. There were many factors and circumstances which influenced Mu'taṣim's decisions to employ the Turks and other new troops. Some of them existed long before the establishment of the 'Abbāsīd Empire, others arose after the death of Mu'taṣim's father and continued throughout the reign of his brother Ma'mūn.<sup>(4)</sup>

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1. Buldān, p.255; Ṭabarī, III, p.1182.
  2. Ṭabarī states, III, p.1182. For Mu'taṣim a garden was made in his house, consisting of all kinds of flowers and plants.
  3. For details see Buldān, pp.255f; Ṭabarī, III, p.1179; Murūj, VII, pp.118f. and Tanbih, pp.356f; Kāmil, VI, p.319; Mu'jam., III, pp.16f., and see also for the recent authors, Richmond, Moslem Architecture, p.49; Dimand, Sāmarrā ephemeral, p.85.
  4. R.T.I., p.40.

One of those factors was probably fear of the growing power of the Persians, whose political and social ideas were gradually asserting themselves throughout the empire.

Mu'taṣim had need of the Turks and other new troops because of the military qualities endemic of their nature. He wanted them also to resist the many uprisings and revolts such as had embarrassed his brother the Caliph Ma'mūn and were soon to confront him also.<sup>(1)</sup>

Mu'taṣim got these Turkish troops from the north east of Persia and employed them as a bodyguard. The sources showed that Mu'taṣim started collecting the Turkish troops during his brother Ma'mūn's Califate, for Ya'qūbī records that: Ja'far al-Khushaki told him, al-Mu'taṣim used to send him, in the reign of al-Ma'mūn, to Nuh ibn Asad at Samarqand to purchase Turks, and each year he would bring back a number, so that during the reign of al-Ma'mūn he accumulated upwards of 3,000 youths.<sup>(2)</sup>

He continued to obtain them all through his brother's and his own reigns, so that the number quickly grew to be about 70,000. Ya'qūbī declared that when he succeeded to the Califate he maintained his search for them, buying such as were the slaves of people at Baghdād. Amongst those he bought in Baghdād was a

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1. Ibid., p.45. However, most of the historians, like Ya'qūbī, Ṭabarī, Mas'ūdī, ibn Faqih, ibn Athīr, Jaḥiẓ, have left a great deal of information on the Turks both in their military capacities and in their physical characteristics. The most significant of all is the work of Jaḥiẓ on the Turks which is called Manāqib al-Turk, in which he compares the Turkish troops with all the other troops of their Caliphate at that time. He mentions all the facts relating to their courage and military ability. See, R.T.I., p.46.

2. Buldān, p.29.

considerable group which included Ashnās, who was a maker of chain mail, a mamlūk of the house of Nu'mān, and Simā of Damascus.<sup>(1)</sup>

The main point here which might be important in discussing the reason why Mu'taṣim left Baghdād for Sāmarrā is that, these Turks were primarily responsible according to all the historians for the trouble and riots in Baghdād. Ya'qūbī makes this clear in his account stating that: "when these alien Turks went out riding, they would gallop and collide with people right and left. The populace would then set on them, sometimes beating them and sometimes killing them, so that their blood would be a testimony against those who had committed the outrage."<sup>(2)</sup>

This angered the citizens of Baghdād, where one of the elders, as Ṭabarī relates,<sup>(3)</sup> addressed Mu'taṣim when he was going back after finishing his feast prayer "O! Abū Ishāq, may God requite you for being a bad neighbour. You came to our city and brought with you these wild asses,<sup>(4)</sup> and planted them in our midst to make our children orphans, and our women widows and to kill our men".

1. Ibid., p.30.

2. Ibid., p.30.

3. III, p.1181; cf. Kāmil, VI, p.319; ibn aṭ-Ṭaḡṭaqa, p.173f.

4. Some historians as Ṭabarī, III, p.1181, used to call those Turkish troops as 'Ulūj. which means "wild asses", and others such as Ya'qūbī, Buldān, p.30., Mas'ūdī in Tanbīh, p.356; Ṭabarī, III, p.1181 called them as 'Ujum, which means Foreigners.



The Turkish troops began to complain also, <sup>(1)</sup> Mu'taṣim was however in a difficult position as he could punish neither his body-guard nor the citizens.

Bitterness against the Turkish soldiers was not confined to the civilian population; it infected the old soldiers as well, so much so that Mu'taṣim feared real rebellion against him and his Turkish troops. <sup>(2)</sup> Ṭabarī records that he said: "I fear that these Ḥarbiyya will rise as one man." <sup>(3)</sup>

As I mentioned at the commencement of this chapter, most of the historians agree that Mu'taṣim's departure took place in the year (220 H./835 A.D.), and if we seek the help of the historical evidence to fix absolutely the date of his movement, we may note that Ya'qūbī and Ṭabarī mentioned the month Dhu-l-qi'da, <sup>(4)</sup> while Mas'ūdī and Yāqūt mentioned the end of the year 220 H. <sup>(5)</sup> We may therefore conclude that Mu'taṣim definitely left Baghdād either by the end of the year 220 H. or at the beginning of 221 H.

It would seem that Mu'taṣim did not set out directly to Sāmarrā, for there is some evidence to suggest that he had moved from one place to another till he finally settled on Sāmarrā, as the most suitable place and there he ordered the new capital to be constructed.

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1. Ṭabarī, III, p.1181.

2. R.T.I., p.57.

3. III, p.1179; cf. Kāmil, VI, p.319, ibn aṭ-ṭaḥṭaḥ, p.319, Mu'jam, III, p.16.

4. Ta'rikh, II, p.164; Ṭabarī, III, p.1179.

5. Tanbīh, pp.356f; Mu'jam, III, p.16.



Ya'qūbī<sup>1</sup> alone gives a very brief account following Mu'taṣim step by step, from Baghdād till Sāmarrā, he says: "Mu'taṣim could not bear this state of affairs so he decided to leave Baghdād. He went accordingly to ash-Shammāsīyya,<sup>(2)</sup> the place to which al-Ma'mūn used to go to stay for days and months together, and resolved to build a town there outside Baghdād. He found however that the space available was not sufficient and moreover, he disliked being so near to Baghdād, so he moved on to al-Baradān<sup>(3)</sup> on the advice of Faql ibn Marwān, who had been minister. This took place (221 H./836 A.D.). He remained for several days in al-Baradān and had architects brought there. But he was not satisfied with the place, so he went to another named Baḥamshā<sup>(4)</sup> on the east side of the Tigris. There he projected a town on the river and looked for a place to dig a canal, but did not find one. He moved on, therefore, to a village named al-Maṭira and there also he remained for some time. Afterwards

1. Buldān, p.30., Yāqūt does not mention to the place which Mu'taṣim has changed, but he only mentions Mu'jam., III, p.16, that Mu'taṣim moved from site to site till he found the place where he built.
2. ash-Shammāsīyya, as Yāqūt says, Mu'jam., III, pp.317f. "It is called after a Christian Sexton, it is situated near the Roman House which was to the north of Baghdād, where later Mu'zz ad-Dawlla al-Husayn Aḥmad built his house in the year (305 H./917 A.D.) so it was a suburb to the north-east of Baghdād just beyond al-Ruṣāfa, see Lestrangle, Bagdad during the 'Abbāsid Caliphate, p.170.
3. Al-Baradān, was as Yāqūt mentions, Mu'jam., I, p.552, one of Baghdād's village about 7 Farsakhs [35 Kilometres from Bagdad].
4. Baḥamshā, as Yāqūt mentions Mu'jam, I. p.458, was a village situated between Awwana and al-Ḥazīra.

he went to al-Qāṭūl. This, said he, is the best place. Let the Canal called al-Qāṭūl pass through the middle of the town, and the buildings be along the Tigris and al-Qāṭūl.<sup>(1)</sup> Mas ūdī does not mention all the places at which Mu'taṣim stayed.

It seems clear that Mu'taṣim occupied al-Baradān, about four Farsakhs (20 kilometres) from Baghdād, for a time, but as he disliked its air, he started to move and examine other sites and places near the Tigris till he reached the site known as Qāṭūl.<sup>(2)</sup>

At Qāṭūl he began building and allotted separate plots to the military and civil officers and the people, as well as an area for the bazaars. The construction was begun and the buildings reached a certain height.

However, most of the historians agree that Qāṭūl was no more than the last stage in Mu'taṣim's move to Sāmarrā, and that it was there that he chose to build his Capital. Qāṭūl was a familiar place for the 'Abbāsīd Califs, for ar-Rashīd had built not only a palace there, but also a city, so both Ṭabarī<sup>(3)</sup> and ibn Athīr<sup>(4)</sup> recorded that Masrur [the great servant] said: "Mu'taṣim asked me where did ar-Rashīd go on his excursions when he complained about Baghdād, and I replied, to Qāṭūl where he had built a city, the walls and remains of which are still standing."

It would be interesting to know where Mu'taṣim stayed at Qāṭūl and whether he constructed a new palace for his residence

1. Buldān., p.30.

2. Murūj, VII, p.119.

3. III, p.1180.

4. Kāmil, VI, p.319.

there, or whether he lived in ar-Rashīd's Palace? It is not easy to be sure about this, though the texts do give some information: Balādhuri thus says that "al-Mu'taṣim made his residence at Baghdād and then left it for al-Qāṭūl where he occupied the Qaṣr ar-Rashīd which had been built when ar-Rashīd dug out the Qāṭūl."<sup>(1)</sup>

Ya'qūbī does not mention the palace of ar-Rashīd but he says that Mu'taṣim: "himself lived in one of the buildings which were being erected for him and some of the people."<sup>(2)</sup> And he says that: "Mu'taṣim went out to Qāṭūl, where he planned the location of the city which he built ..... then he moved from Qāṭūl to Sāmarrā."<sup>(3)</sup> Mas'ūdī in Murūj points out that Mu'taṣim built a palace at Qāṭūl.<sup>(4)</sup> In his other book, however, Tanbīh records that the Calif occupied at Qāṭūl the Palace of ar-Rashīd,<sup>(5)</sup> Ṭabarī does not mention the construction of a city at Qāṭūl.<sup>(6)</sup> Ibn Athīr does not mention Mu'taṣim's construction at Qāṭūl, but he records that ar-Rashīd built a town there, the remains and walls of which were still standing.<sup>(7)</sup> Yāqūt in one of his statements failed to distinguish between the two sites, al-Qāṭūl and Sāmarrā, for he records that:<sup>(8)</sup>

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1. Futūḥ., p.460.
  2. Buldān., p.31.
  3. Tarikh., II, p.164.
  4. VII, p.120.
  5. p.357.
  6. III, p.1180.
  7. Kāmil., VI, p.319.
  8. Mu'jam., III, p.16.

ar-Rashīd had dug a canal there which he named al-Qāṭūl and abū l-Jund. Near it he built a palace and Mu'taṣim erected a palace there too, and granted it to Ashnās. When he wanted to found a town the site occurred to his mind so he built it at Sāmarrā. But he says in the second statement that he made his residence for a time in a camp at Qāṭūl. He then started to move from one place to another till he finally chose the site where he built his Capital.

Thus, the historians give such varied reports about Mu'taṣim's residence at Qāṭūl, that they make the position extremely complicated. Nevertheless one may suggest the following conclusions: when he reached Qāṭūl Mu'taṣim at first settled in a camp with his followers, his troops and their leaders. Then when ar-Rashīd's palace had been reconstructed and some buildings added to it in order to make it suitable for the residence of the Calif, he lived for a time there. At the same time he ordered a new town to be built, and it seems that a special building was erected for him. Ya'qūbī mentions in his account that "he himself (Mu'taṣim) lived in one of the buildings which were erected for him."<sup>(1)</sup>

#### Where was the Palace of Mu'taṣim situated?

The historians gave no information as to the position of Mu'taṣim's Palace, the only fact which is at all helpful is that most of them record that it was situated in a district known as

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1. Buldān, p.31.



al-Qāṭūl. Susa states that the palace and the town of Mu'taṣim at Qāṭūl were situated in a place known as al-Qadisiya. The name however includes the whole district which extended from the Palace of Balkuwārā, <sup>(1)</sup> on the west about 8 kilometres to the south east, to the south of al-Qa'im. <sup>(2)</sup> (Figs. 1,3, Maps No.1,3,)

It appears that Mu'taṣim arrived at Qāṭūl at the beginning of the winter season, for Mas'ūdī records that he suffered very much both from the coldness of the place and the hardness of the land. <sup>(3)</sup>

Mu'taṣim, however, disliked the site of al-Qāṭūl, so he did not stay there more than three months, for Ya'qūbī states that Mu'taṣim said: "The ground of al-Qāṭūl is no good, it is all pebbles and stones. Building there is very difficult, besides there is no room there." <sup>(4)</sup>

After this, as Ya'qūbī reports: <sup>(5)</sup> "he rode out to hunt and proceeded until he reached the site of Sāmarrā, then a bare tract of land in the district of aṭ-Ṭīrhān. It was without cultivation or inhabitants, but for a Christian monastery. He halted at the

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1. I shall describe this palace when I deal with "Abbāsīd Architecture at Sāmarrā in the reign of al-Mutawakkil.

2. R.S., I, pp.241f.

3. Murūj., VII, p.119.

4. Buldān., p.31.

5. Ibid., p.31.

monastery and spoke to the monks, asking what the place was called. One of the monks answered him: It was called Surra-man-ra'ā; once it was the City of Sām bin Nūh<sup>(1)</sup> and after ages have passed it will be rebuilt by a great victorious and powerful King .... and he will dwell therein and also his son. At this he said: I indeed am he who will build it again and I will dwell in it, and so also will my son.<sup>(2)</sup>

Most of the historical evidence indicates that the site of Sāmarrā was occupied by a Christian monastery, and that Mu'tasim ordered the land to be bought from the owner of the monastery. Ya'qūbī states this clearly in both his "Buldān" and his "Tarikh". He says that "In the district of Surra-man-ra'ā ... where there was

1. More or less similar of this account but shorter - reports about Mu'tasim's movement looking for available place, are given by Balādhurī, Futūḥ., p.460; Mas'ūdī, Murūj., VII, 120f., and in his Tanbīh., p.357.
2. However, Ya'qūbī alone among all the historians records that Mu'tasim gave a special reason for building Sāmarrā, he says: "Once upon a time ar-Rashīd ordered his sons to go hunting, and I (i.e. Mu'tasim) went with Muḥammad (i.e. al-Amin) and al-Ma'mun and the elder sons of ar-Rashīd. Each of us secured something and my quarry was an owl. Then we left off and showed him our bag. The attendants who were with us began to say, this is what has been taken by so and so, and this by so and so, till at last my game came up before him. But when ar-Rashīd saw the owl which the attendants had hesitated to present for fear that he should consider it ill-omened and I should suffer some rebuff on this part, he asked: who got this? and they replied Abū Ishāq. He was glad and laughed, showing his pleasure, and said: Behold he will succeed to the Khalifate and his army and his Companion and those most in favour with him will be people with faces like the face of this owl. He will rebuild an ancient City and will dwell there with such people and his son will dwell there after him. Ar-Rashīd was not so pleased with anything taken that day as he was with my having taken the owl.



a Christian monastery he bought the land from the monastery's owner."<sup>(1)</sup> He also records that "Mu'taṣim then decided to settle at that place. So he summoned Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Malik az-Zaiyāt and ibn Abu Du'ād and 'Umar ibn Faraj and Aḥmad ibn Khālīd, known as Abū-l-Wazīr, and directed them to buy the land from the people of the monastery, proposing to them as the price of 4,000 Dinārs, and they did so."<sup>(2)</sup>

Mas'ūdī records that when Mu'taṣim settled on the site he called the people of the monastery and bought from them their land for 4,000 Dinārs.<sup>(3)</sup> He also relates that the location of the palace of al-Mu'taṣim was on the site of the land and monastery which he bought from the Christians to whom it belonged.<sup>(4)</sup> Al-'Umarī also mentions that when he spoke about the monastery of as-Susī, he noted that it was on the western bank of Surra-man-ra'ā. Mu'taṣim purchased its land from the owners.<sup>(5)</sup>

#### D - WHY MU'TAṢIM CHOSE SĀMARRĀ.

As most of the historical evidence has shown, it seems clear that Mu'taṣim was following no precedent in choosing the site of Sāmarrā; rather must one admit, that Mu'taṣim's choice was settled only after trying and testing various other places.

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1. Tarikh, II, p.164.
  2. Buldān, p.32.
  3. Murūj., VII, p.121.
  4. Tanbīh., p.357.
  5. M.A.M.A., p.262.



This was apparent from his movements, after he left Baghdād in search of a convenient place to build his capital. Though Ṭabarī presents in his book a report from Aḥmad ibn Khālīd, he says that Mu'taṣim sent him in the year (219 A.H.) to buy land at Sāmarrā to build a town ... he came to that site and bought Sāmarrā from the Christians who were the owners of the monastery.<sup>(1)</sup> This seems to me an unlikely report, for it is hard to believe that Mu'taṣim would have sought for land at Sāmarrā in one place if he already possessed it in another.

However if Mu'taṣim could move from one site to another accompanied by a vast army of troops, followers, families and workers, it is clear that he was very anxious to be certain that he had chosen the right site.

As I have mentioned above, the site which Sāmarrā was to occupy later was well-known long before 'Abbāsīd times both to the Persians and Romans.

One may note that Sāmarrā has many advantages. First of all its strategical location puts it in an advantageous position to control the various parts of the whole Empire. The city was surrounded by water on all sides [Fig. 1, Map No.1], the Tigris bordering it to the west from the extreme fringe of the city right to its southern limit.

This afforded the town easy communications with both the northern and southern parts of Iraq, and was valuable both for political and for commercial reasons.

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1. III, p.1179.

The stream of the two courses of an-Nahrawān bordered the site on the east, so no doubt the Tigris and an-Nahrawān marked Sāmarrā out as a significant military position and water created a natural defensive wall, putting the town within a safe area [see Map No.1].

In addition, the high altitude of Sāmarrā offered protection against flooding which annually threatened Baghdād. At Sāmarrā there was a wide expanse of land which could conveniently accommodate a new town and with its virgin but fertile soil and the plentiful supply of water it could provide the food and amenities for the new inhabitants, not least amongst the advantages was its cool temperature.<sup>(1)</sup>

Mu'taṣim after having bought the land from its owner, started to erect the necessary palaces and buildings. Unfortunately most of those founded at the time of Mu'taṣim are now represented in the main by formless ruins, which cannot give any clear idea of the city plan at the time of Mu'taṣim.

Very special attention has been given by historians to The Round City of al-Manṣūr at Baghdād, especially by al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī and Ya'qūbī whose works give a complete idea of its plan.<sup>(2)</sup>

The three principal Islamic cities, Baṣra , Kūfa , and Wāsiṭ have also received consideration in the early Arabic writers.

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1. R.T.I., p.62.

2. Buldān, pp.4-28; Khatīb., I, pp.

Sāmarrā, however, did not receive the same attention that was given to the other Iraqi Cities, except for a brief account, written in his book "Buldān" by Ya'qūbī who lived for a time in Sāmarrā.

In this report he gives the names of streets, allotments, and markets. He points out Mu'taṣim's palace, as al-Jawsaq al-Khāqānī, al-Ghumarī [probably al-'Umarī] and al-Wazīrī without giving details of their plans.

But he neglected to record the scheme of Mu'taṣim's mosque, and satisfied himself by saying: "Then he had plots of ground marked out for the military and civil officers and for the people, and likewise the Great Mosque".<sup>(1)</sup> We have quite a lot of details about the three walls of Baghdād, its Faṣils, Raḥbas, mosque and its palace at the time of foundation. But we know practically nothing about the projects and buildings which were established in the reign of Mu'taṣim other than what has been learnt from the result of excavations carried out at the Palace of Jawsaq al-Khāqānī by Viollet, by the German expedition, and by an Iraqi expedition. But Ya'qūbī's report gives a general idea of the plan followed by Mu'taṣim. He records that: "he (Mu'taṣim) had architects brought and told them to choose the most suitable positions [for certain sites] and they selected a number of sites for the palaces. He made each of his [principal] followers responsible for building one palace. He gave to

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1. Buldān, p.32.

Khāqān 'Urṭūj Abū-l-Faṭḥ ibn Khāqān the building of al-Jawsaq, to 'Umar ibn Faraj the building of the palace known as al-'Umari, to Abū-l-Wazīr the building of the palace known as al-Waziri. Then he had plots of ground marked out for the military and civil officers and for the people, and likewise the Great Mosque. And he had the markets drawn out round the mosque, with wide market rows, all the various kinds of merchandise being kept separate, and the various sort of people by themselves, according to the system to which the markets of Baghdād were designed. He wrote asking that workmen, masons and artificers, such as smiths, carpenters and all other craftsmen should be sent, and also ordered teak and other kinds of wood, and palm-trunks from Baṣrah and from the adjoining region, namely Baghdād and the rest of the Sawād, and from Antioch and other towns on the Syrian Coast. Marble workers and men experienced in marble were also brought; and workshops for working marble were established in Latakia and elsewhere. He made allotments of ground to the Turks apart from those made to other people setting them entirely apart and not mingling with any of those foreigners (muwallad) who had adopted Muslim civilization and without neighbours except people from Farqhāna. To Ashnās and his followers he granted the place called al-Karkh, and he attached a number of Turkish captains and men to him, and ordered them to build mosques and markets. To Khāqān 'Urṭūj and his followers he granted ground next to al-Jawsaq al-Khāqānī, and ordered him to keep his followers together to prevent them from mixing with the other people.

To Waṣīf and his followers he granted some ground next to al-Ḥayr, and he (Waṣīf) built a long wall which he called Ḥā'ir al-Ḥayr [The Garden of al-Ḥayr].

The allotments to the whole body to Turks and to alien people from Farqḥānā were made far from the markets and crowded parts, with broad streets and long alleys. No other people either merchants or any others, lived intermingled with them in their allotments, or in their alleys. He bought slave-girls for them, married them to these women and forbade them to ally themselves by marriage to any of the foreigners.

He made a regular allowance to the slave-girls of the Turks and entered their names in the official registers. Thus no Turk was able to divorce his wife or leave her. When he had made a grant of ground to the Turk Ashnās at the west end of the town, and grants to his followers with him, and named the place al-Karkh, he ordered him not to allow any stranger whether a merchant or any one else, to dwell in the neighbourhood, and likewise not to permit any intercourse with foreigners.

He made a grant to another body, above al-Karkh, and named the place ad-Dūr, and built mosques and baths for them in the space between ad-Dūr and the allotments. In every place he established a little market with a number of shops for corn dealers, butchers, and such others as were necessary and could not be done without.

He made a grant to al-Afshīn at the end of the buildings of the town, about two farsakhs to the east, and named the place

al-Maṭīra, and granted plots to his followers, from Ushrushana and elsewhere round about his residence. He ordered him to build a small market to contain shops for merchants dealing in indispensable articles; also mosques and baths.

Ḥasan ibn Sahl asked for the grant of a piece of ground between the extremity of the markets, which ended at the hill where the gibbet of Bābak stood later, and al-Maṭīra, the place of the piece of land granted to al-Afshīn. At that time there were no habitations there, but afterwards it became so surrounded by edifices that the grant of Ḥasan ibn Sahl became the centre of Surra-man-ra'ā. The buildings of the inhabitants extended in every direction and reached as far as al-Maṭīra. Streets were established for the grants of land made for the captains from Khurasān and their followers, soldiers and attendants, and to right and left of the streets were the alleys in which were the dwellings of the general population.

The street known as as-Sarīja [See Fig. 4, Map. No.3] which was the main street, extended from al-Maṭīra to the Wadī which is known today as Wadī Ishāq ibn Ibrāhīm, because Ishāq ibn Ibrāhīm, in the reign of al-Mutawakkil, moved from the site allotted to him and erected an extensive building at the head of this Wadī. Then came the grant of Ishāq ibn Yaḥyā ibn Mu'ādh, then the grants of the people joined one another to the right and the left of this main street, running through on one side to the street known as that of Abū Aḥmad. That is Abū Aḥmad ibn ar-Rashīd - and on the other to the Tigris and the parts



adjacent to it. The grant of land ran along as far as the Diwān al-Kharāj A'zām, which is in this great street. And in this street were allotments granted to the Khurāsāni Captains, including that of Hashim ibn Banijūr and 'Ujayf ibn 'Anbasa and the allotment of Ḥasan ibn 'Ali al-Ma'mūni and of Hārūn ibn Nu'aim and of Ḥizām ibn Ghālib. At the back of the allotment of Ḥizām were the stables of the animals of the Calif, both special and ordinary, under the charge of Ḥizām and his brother Ya'qūb.

Then came the places of the vendors of fresh vegetables and the slave market in a square with roads leading in various directions, and houses containing rooms and upper chambers, the shops of slaves, then the house of Watch, the great prison, and private dwellings. The dwellings of the people and the markets were on the street, on the right hand and on the left, with vendors of every sort of thing and industries of all description, reaching to the gibbet of Bābak. Then came the great market, in which were no dwelling houses. Every trade was separate and the people of one craft did not mingle with those of another. Then came the old mosque in which the Friday prayer continued to be celebrated until the time of al-Mutawakkil, when it became too small; he had it pulled down and a spacious Great Mosque was built at the end of al-Ḥair, the mosque and the bazar being on one side and on the other, the grants of land and dwelling houses and the market-place of the dealers in things of small value, such as Fuggā', harīsa, and sherbet; then came the allotment of Rashīd



al-Magribī, the allotment of Mubārak al-Maghibī, the little market of Mubārak, and the hill of Ja'far al-Khayyāṭ, in which was the grant of Ja'far. Farther on was the allotment of Abū-l-Wazīr, then the allotment of 'Abbās ibn 'Alī ibn al-Mahdī, then the allotment of 'Abd-al-Wahhab ibn 'Alī al-Mahdī. Then the street continued with allotments of Common people, the palace of Hārūn ibn al-Mu'taṣim (i.e. al-Wathīq) near the House of the people [Dar al-'Āmma], which was later on the house inhabited by Yaḥyā ibn-Aktham in the reign of al-Mutawakkil, when he later made him Chief Qāḍī. Then came the Gate of people (Bab al-'Āmma) and the palace of the Calif (Dār al-Calīfa), which is the House of people, in which he used to sit on Monday and Thursday. Then came the Treasuries, private as well as public, then the allotment of Masrūr Samāna, the servitor, who was in charge of the Treasuries, then the allotment of Qarqās, the servitor, who was from Khurāsān, then the allotment of Thābit the servitor then the allotment of Abu-l-Ja'fā, and the other servitors.

The second street [Fig. 4, Map No.3] was known as that of Abū Aḥmad ibn ar-Rashīd. The beginning of this street to the east was the house of Bakhtishū' the physician, which had been built in the reign of al-Mutawakkil. Then came the areas granted to the captains from Khurāsān and their adherents consisting of Arabs, people from Qum, Isfahān, Qazwin, al-Jabal, and Adharbayjān; on the right to the south, in the same direction as the gībla, was a way through to the great street of as-Sarija, and that part of it lying to the north, in the opposite direction, had a way through

to the Shāri' Abū Aḥmad, and the allotment of 'Umar, the allotment of the clerks and other people; and the allotment of Aḥmad ibn ar-Rashīd was in the middle of the street. At the end of this district, next to the Western Wādī, which is the Wādī of Ibrāhīm ibn Riyāḥ, lay the allotment of ibn Abū Du'ād, the allotment of al-Faḍl ibn Marwān, the allotment of Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Malik az-Zayyāt, and the allotment of Ibrāhīm ibn Riyāḥ was on the great street. Then the various grants in this street and in its alleys joined one another to the right and to the left as far as the grant to Bughā the younger. Then came the grant of Bugha the Elder, then the grant of Simā of Damascus; then the grant of Barmash, then the old allotment of Waṣīf then the allotment of Itākh, touching the Bāb al-Bustān and the palaces of the Calif.

The third street [Fig. 4, Map No.3] is the first Shāri' al Ḥayr, in which was the house of Aḥmad ibn-al-Khaṣīb in the reign of al-Mutawakkil. This street begins at the east at the Wādī which runs into the Wādī Ishāq ibn Riyāḥ. On it lie the allotment of the soldiers and attendants and people of various descriptions, and it extends as far as the Wādī Ibrāhīm ibn Riyāḥ.

The fourth street [Fig. 4, Map No.3] is known as Shāri' Barghamush at-Turkī. On it lie the allotments of the Turks and people from Farghāna, the alleys of each being a part, those of the Turks being to the southward and those of the people of Farghāna to the northward, opposite one another. Each alley faces an alley; no people of another race were permitted to

mingles with them.

At the eastern end of the dwellings of the Turks and their allotments were the allotments of the Khazars. This street began at al-Maṭīra, by the allotments of al-Afshīn, which later became that of Waṣīf and his followers, it extended as far as the Wādī which runs into the Wādī Ibrāhīm ibn Riyāḥ.

The fifth street was known as that of Sālīḥ al-‘Abbāsī. It is the Shārī‘ al-‘Askar (Fig. 4, Map No.3]. On it lay the allotment of the Turks and men from Farghāna, both here also in separate alleys. It extended from al-Maṭīra as far as the palace of Ṣālīḥ al-‘Abbāsī, which was at the head of the Wādī. This joined the allotments of Captains and Clerks, men of position and all sorts of others. Then came the street behind Shārī‘ al-‘Askar, called the new Shārī‘ al-Ḥair, in which live a mixture of people consisting of captains of troops from Farghāna, Uṣrūshana and Ishtākhanj, and others from other districts of Khurāsān. And whenever these streets of al-Ḥair touched land granted to other people, he [the Calif] would order the wall [of al-Ḥair] to be pulled down and rebuilt farther back. Behind the wall were wild animals, gazelles, wild asses; deer, hares, and ostriches, kept in within an enclosing wall in a fine broad open tract.

The main street, which lay on the Tigris, was called Shārī‘ al-Khalīj [Fig. 4, Map No.3]. There were wharves there, with the vessels and merchandise which came from Baghdād, Wasīṭ, Kaskar, and the rest of the Sawād, from Baṣrah, Ubulla, Ahwāz and the neighbouring region and from Mosul, Ba‘arbāyā, Diyar Rabī‘a and

the neighbouring region. On this street were the allotments of all the Maghribis or, at least, most of them, and the place named al-Azlaḥ, which was occupied by the Maghrībī infantry when Surra-man-ra'ā was first marked out. The people had more space for their buildings at Surra-man-ra'ā than they had at Baghdād and they built roomy houses. Only their drinking water came entirely from the Tigris, being brought in skins on mules and camels, for their wells were so deep as to require long ropes; besides, the water in them was salty and disagreeable to the taste, and it was not abundant. The Tigris, however, was near and animals for carrying water were plentiful.

In view of these descriptions it would seem that the plan followed by Mu'taṣim at Sāmarrā was different from that followed in the earlier Iraqi Muslim cities, Baṣra, Kūfa, Wāsiṭ and Baghdād.

These cities were designed with a great mosque in the centre, the Dar al-Imara (The Governor House) adjacent to it, and the houses, markets and government offices surrounding it. Baṣrah was the earliest of the Muslim cities<sup>(1)</sup> in Iraq. It was built by 'Utba ibn Ghazwān in the reign of 'Umar, the second Caliph. The historians do not give the exact year of its foundation, but it was probably founded in the year (14 A.H./634 A.D.)<sup>(2)</sup> The mosque according to Balādhurī<sup>(3)</sup> was simply marked

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1. Futūḥ, pp.346-351; Tanbīh., pp.357f; Ma'ārif., pp.279f; E.M.A., I, p.15.

2. See Tabarī, I, pp.2377-2380 and pp.2383f; Mu'jam., I, p.640, while Ya'qubī in Buldan mentions the year (17 A.H.) and ibn al-Faḡīh in Buldan, mentions the year (16 A.H.).

3. Futūḥ., pp.341f.

out on the ground and the people prayed there without any building. According to another version also given by Balādhurī,<sup>(1)</sup> it was originally constructed of reeds. 'Utba also built Dar al-Imara nearer to the mosque,<sup>(2)</sup>

Kūfa was the second earliest Muslim City; it was founded in the year (17 A.H. /638 A.D.) by order of the Calif 'Umar.<sup>(3)</sup> According to Balādhurī, 'Umar wrote to Sa'd ibn abī Waqqās (The Commander-in-Chief who captured Ctesiphon in the year 16 A.H.) ordering him to adopt for the Muslims a place to which they could emigrate and which they could use as a meeting place, provided that between them ('Umar) and the Muslims, no sea should intervene. Accordingly Sa'd came to al-Anbar with the idea of occupying it. Here, however, flies were so numerous that Sa'd had to move to another place. This also proved to be unsatisfactory and he therefore moved to al-Kūfa which he divided into lots, giving the houses as fiefs and settling the different tribes in their quarters. He also erected a mosque there.<sup>(4)</sup> Balādhurī states too that when Sa'd arrived on the spot destined for the site of the mosque, he ordered a man to shoot an arrow towards the qibla, another towards the north, another to the south, a fourth to the east, and to mark the spots where the arrows fell. Sa'd

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1. Ibid., pp.340 and 350.

2. Ibid., p.341 f.

3. Futūḥ., pp.434-436; Ṭabarī, I, pp.2481-2483, and pp.2485-2492 and p.2494; Mu'jam., IV, pp.322-324; Maqdisī, pp. 116f; Hawqal, pp.162f.

4. Futūḥ., pp.434f.

then established the mosque and the governor's residence on the spot where the man who shot the arrows had stood, fencing in all the spaces around that spot.<sup>(1)</sup> Soon after in the year (17 A.H.) both the mosque and the Qaṣr were rebuilt where the Governor's residence stood, close to the south side of the mosque.<sup>(2)</sup>

The third earliest Muslim City in Iraq was Wāsiṭ founded according to Balādhurī by al-Ḥajjāj ibn-Yūsuf ath-Thaqafī, in the year (83 or 84 A.H.)<sup>(3)</sup> He also built its mosque, castle and Qubbat al-Khaḍrā' [The Green Dome]. The site of Wāsiṭ having been covered with reeds (Qaṣab), the city acquired the name of Wāsiṭ al-Qaṣab. This city is equidistant from al-Ahwāz, al-Baṣra and al-Kūfa.

When al-Ḥajjāj completed the erection of Wāsiṭ he wrote to 'Abd-al-Malik "I have built a city in a hollow of the ground between al-Jabal and al-Miṣrain [namely Baṣrah and Kūfa] and called it Wāsiṭ" [lying halfway between].<sup>(4)</sup>

1. Ibid., p.435.

2. E.M.A., I, p.18.

3. The majority of writers agree that al-Ḥajjāj founded his new city in the year (83 A.H./703 A.D.) or in 84 A.H. and finished building it in (86 A.H.) For details see Futūḥ., p.449; Ṭabarī., II, p.1225f; Ansāb., p.576; Mu'jam., IV. p.884; A.B.A.E., p.320; A.F., p.307. But according to Baḥshal, p.10, who is the most notable authority on the early history of the city, the work of the building lasted from (75 A.H./694 A.D.) to (78 A.H./697 A.D.) For details see Safar, Wasiṭ., pp.1f.

4. Futūḥ., p.449.



The excavations carried out at Wāsiṭ by the Iraqi expedition<sup>(1)</sup> under the supervision of Prof. Safar, brought to light the remains of both the palace of al-Ḥajjāj [Qaṣr al-Imāra or palace of principality] and the mosque of al-Ḥajjāj. Safar mentions in respect of the mosque that there was some doubt in view of archaeological and other evidence. The earliest building in the site of the first mosque may now safely be identified as the mosque of al-Ḥajjāj.<sup>(2)</sup>

With regard to the palace of Wāsiṭ, Safar claims that the excavators were justified in assuming that the partially excavated building immediately behind the qibla wall of the mosque, was the Palace of al-Ḥajjāj.<sup>(3)</sup>

The same system was followed in Baghdād, but with some small changes, for Manṣūr built his palace known as Qaṣr Bāb aḡh-Ḍahab [The Palace of the Golden Gate] in the centre of the

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1. Safar mentions in his book "Wāsiṭ" that in the sixth season's work at Wāsiṭ, the Directorate General had two principal objectives, the first of these was to continue their search for the famous Palace of al-Ḥajjāj known in antiquity as al-Qubbat al-Khaḍrā, [i.e. The Green Dome]. According to the evidence of Ancient Writers and of architectural precedent the location of this palace could be thought to be in the immediate vicinity of the building examined with previous season and provisionally identified as Ḥajjāj's mosque.
  2. Safar, op.cit., p.24.
  3. Ibid., p.27.



Round City,<sup>(1)</sup> and established the principal mosque next to his palace.<sup>(2)</sup>

It would appear from this, and from what archaeological excavations have established that the Muslims were following specific rules in constructing their cities.

But it is clear that in the erection of Sāmarrā, Mu'taṣim and the engineers who were in charge of planning and building broke some of the rules that had previously been followed in the earlier cities of Baṣrah, Kufa, Wāsiṭ and Baghdād. It seems to me that the more recent idea of placing the mosque and the surrounding markets far away from Mu'taṣim's palace may have been to keep the Calif's residence well away from the city centre. He may have been influenced in this decision by the actions of Manṣūr when the latter built Baghdād. Originally the markets were built within the city of al-Manṣūr, in arcades flanking the four roads to the gates, but, before many years had passed the Calif ordered the removal of all shops in the city, and he then built

1. Various pieces of historical evidence indicate that the Palace of the Golden Gate, was built in the middle of Raḥba for instance Ya'qūbī records in Buldān, p.11 "In the middle of Raḥba was the Palace which its gate named the Golden Gate". Ibn Rustāh in al-'Alaḡ al-nafisah, p.108 records that "in the middle of the city a palace of abu Ja'far called Bab aḡ-Ḍahab"; ibn Athīr also states the same in Kāmil., V, p.21, that Manṣūr "built his Palace in the middle."
2. Khaṭīb, I, p.107; cf. Buldān, p.11; E.M.A., II, p.9 (Fig.2) and see pp.31-35; A.A.E.M.A., p.179; E.I./2, I, art. "Architecture", p.616.

the suburb of Karkh. <sup>(1)</sup>

Apparently from the account of Ya'qūbī mentioned above and from the aerial photographs which indicate the locations of the existing standing ruins, the plan of Sūmarrā at the time of Mu'taṣim was nearly as follows:

Firstly: The Great Mosque was situated on the street known as Sārija. Prayers continued in this mosque throughout the period of Mu'taṣim and his son Wathīq, but when Mutawakkil came to the throne he pulled it down, and built a larger one at the end of al-Ḥair.

Secondly: The various markets were located around the mosque. Again Mu'taṣim copied Manṣūr, grouping together craftsmen with similar trades in particular areas. In addition to this he ordered that every allotment should have a small market with several shops containing all the essential commodities.

Thirdly: He granted the captains, clerks, and the rest of the people allotments on which to build their dwellings. In furtherance of his idea of assigning separate areas of different groups, each section was restricted to people from the same original locality. These groups were, in turn, surrounded by other groups from originally neighbouring localities. Mu'taṣim

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1. For Details see Ṭabarī, III, pp.323-325; Khaṭīb., I, p.78; Le Strange, Baghdad during the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate., p.26; al-Amīd op.cit., pp.253f. The markets stayed occupied the four arcades of the Round City of al-Manṣūr, until (157 A.H./773 A.D.) when a remark of the Greek ambassador, to the effect that it was unwise to have them so close to the palace area, decided al-Manṣūr to transfer them to the suburb of Karkh which was founded outside the walls for that purpose. See also Kāmil., VI., p.439; E.M.A., II, p.16.

paid special attention to his Turkish soldiers, who were settled in separate quarters, out of contact with the common people and surrounded only by the Farq̄hānis. Even Farq̄hānis did not come into contact with them, for they had their own separate mansions and streets, away from the crowded common markets in a neighbourhood that contained wide boulevards.<sup>(1)</sup>

It seems from this decision that Mu'taṣim still remembered the difficulties that had arisen in Baghdād between the inhabitants and his Turkish troops.

This is made completely clear in the text given by Ya'qūbī who records that "when Mu'taṣim made allotments to the Turks .... setting them entirely apart and not mingled with any of those foreigners"<sup>(2)</sup> and he ordered Khāqān ʿUrṭuj "to keep his followers together and to prevent them from mixing with other people".<sup>(3)</sup> Furthermore he ordered that the allotment of the Turks should be far from the markets and crowded parts. He wanted to plan their dwellings with broad streets and long alleys so as to provide them surroundings which suited their natural characteristics as mountain dwellers.

This leads me to the conclusion that Sāmarrā was divided into several residential areas, each allotted to a particular captain and his followers. The divisions were made on the basis of both national traits and place of origin.

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1. R.T.I., pp.67f.

2. Buldān., p.32.

3. Ibid., p.33.

Fourthly: According to the account presented by Ya'qūbī the buildings extended south of Sāmarrā as far as Māṭira, where the plot of Ashnās was located about two Farsakh (10 kilometres) to the south of the town, the extension to the north reached the site of al-Karkh where the plot of Ashnās and his followers lay, about 10 kilometres to the north of the town centre. So the various buildings must have extended for almost 20 kilometres.

The buildings which have been definitely erected by al-Mu'taṣim, or identified to him are:

- a. The Palace of al-Mu'taṣim (al-Jawsaq al-Khāqānī)
- b. The building of al-Ḥuwaysalat.
- c. Iṣṭablat Camp.

C H A P T E R    I I I

THE 'ABBĀSID ARCHITECTURE AT SĀMARRĀ IN THE  
REIGN OF MU'TAṢIM

## A- THE PALACE OF AL-MU'TAŞIM "AL-JAWSAQ AL-KHĀQĀNĪ"

The ruins of this palace, the most spectacular monument of the civil architecture of Sāmarrā, has attracted the attention of a number of European scholars and archaeologists since the middle of the nineteenth century. But excavation did not begin until the first ten years of the twentieth century had passed, when the French architect, Viollet, carried out the first excavations at Dār al-<sup>al</sup>Calīfa.<sup>(1)</sup> [The House of Calif]

Viollet described the ruins as consisting of a group of three big parallel rooms vaulted in the shape of a cradle known as the Ctesiphon of the Arabs, as their disposition was reminiscent of the ruins of that great Sassanid Palace. In fact they formed only a very small part of an immense castle which would appear to have covered an area of about 21 hectares, as can be seen from a survey made from the top of the central vault. A number of parallel and symmetrical lines can be distinguished in this great mass of ruins which appear to mark the limits of a vast construction. A photograph taken from this point of observation, together with a careful visual examination, serves to establish the curious plan that I now present here.<sup>(2)</sup> [Figs. 5, 6] This may be

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1. D.A.I., Hafriyyāt Sāmarrā, p.1, It may be noted that the whole palace was known as the Palace of al-Mu'taşim called after the founder of Sāmarrā, and also in the statements of the Arabs historians as "al-Jawsaq al-Khāqānī". cf. Buldān, p.40, and Ta'rikh, II, pp.164-168. But Bāb al-ʿĀmma [The Gate of People] which still stands was the entrance of the Palace and it is the best preserved part of the palace, consisting of a great triple-arch.

2. D.P.M., p.15.

compared with the imaginary reconstruction made by Viollet [Fig.7].

The Arabic texts give no attention to this Palace and their reports about Sāmarrā completely neglect any description of this significant building. Nevertheless, the descriptions and accounts which have been given by recent historians and archaeologists do provide adequate material for revealing its layout.

John Ross who passed through Sāmarrā in 1834 and noted them as the best preserved ruins on the site, gives a brief description of the whole area that Viollet was later to investigate. Ross's description corresponds closely with Viollet's plan and the measurements are almost identical.<sup>(1)</sup>

Ross described the Jawsaq al-Khāqānī as a long T-shaped mass of ruins on the edge of a high bank, divided by three cross walls: its extreme length he gives as about 900 paces and the width as 580. Here it consists of ranges of gateways, arched rooms and underground vaults, with a number of empty areas divided by cross walls. One vault excavated to a great depth was called Jibb.<sup>(2)</sup> [The Well]

Shortly after Viollet's report, very extensive excavations were carried out by a German expedition under Sarre and Herzfeld.

Herzfeld writes: The excavation of this palace was carried out during a period of more than seven months, using 250 to 300 workmen and a field railway. The area of the palace surrounded by a wall amounts to 175 hectares, of which about 71 hectares are

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1. Ibid., p.16.

2. J.R.G.S., XI, p.128.



occupied by the garden facing the Tigris together with its pavilions, halls and basins. An excavation of the whole palace would therefore have required more than twenty years of work. However, the problem was not so great as it sounds, for it was possible by a careful study, even without excavation, to follow the general layout of the palace and the greater part of the arrangement of the different rooms. Excavations could therefore be limited to the principal parts, i.e. the parts lying on the main axis. About 4,000 sq.m. were laid bare and 32,000 cubic metres of debris moved. Of that, about 11,000 sq.m. came from the excavations in the centre of the palace. The excavation began with several smaller investigations in the main and transverse axes, of the Great Esplanade, because of a delay in the arrival of the field railway. Only after that were they extended to the central main building.

The plan of the immense layout was revealed step by step. It became fully evident only during the course of the excavations, when the survey of the town was undertaken, that the immense complex had only one entrance. This was in the middle of the west side, the ruins of which are still well preserved today. It is the Bāb al-‘Āmma. It was therefore oriented in the opposite direction to the Balkuwārā Palace and belonged to a type fundamentally different from it.<sup>(1)</sup> [Fig. 8] Ross, who visited the ruins in 1834 saw an inclined platform, resting on arches, leading down to the ḥawī "The lower ground".<sup>(2)</sup>

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1. Mitteilung., V, pp.198f. The statement mentioned above quoted from E.M.A., II, p.232 with slight modifications.

2. J.R.G.S., XI, p.129.

Subsequently the Iraqi Directorate of Antiquities began the excavations in the seasons of 1936, and the work was carried on every year during two or three months each spring till 1939.<sup>(1)</sup>

The systematic excavations carried out by Herzfeld in the palace had revealed both the middle and southern parts together with some of its parts such as the throne rooms, ceremonial chambers, the bath halls, and the women's room [ḥarīm]. But subsequently, throughout the centuries, the people of Sāmarrā have rooted up the bricks from the palace walls to use them in their buildings, so that today little is left standing of all the halls, chambers and rooms, which were discovered by Herzfeld.<sup>(2)</sup>

Dar al-Calif, was situated as Ya'qūbī records on the as-Sarīja Street,<sup>(3)</sup> and as the historians mentioned it was built on land belonging to a Christian monastery which Mu'taṣim purchased from its owners.<sup>(4)</sup>

The Palace is situated on a cliff which at the time of Viollet (1909) dominated a vast plain in the middle of which ran the river. Without doubt this must have passed close to the foot of the castle. From the facade (front) which overlooks the river a sloping platform led towards the valley [Fig. 6].<sup>(5)</sup> Ross writes that this platform rested on arches.<sup>(6)</sup> But Viollet states

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1. D.A.I., Hafriyyat Sāmarrā, I, p.1.

2. D.A.I., Sāmarrā, pp.51f.

3. Buldān, p.35.

4. Ta'rikh, II, p.164; Tanbīh., p.357.

5. D.P.M., p.17.

6. J.R.G.S., XI, p.129.

that he did not see this himself.<sup>(1)</sup> The cliff is made up of an amalgam of pebbles set on a formation of limestone of the type known as "pudding".<sup>(2)</sup> The main axis has an east-west direction almost at right angles to the river-bed and widens to form at its extremity, a large transverse court which gives the complex the shape of a T.<sup>(3)</sup>

Its total length is about 700 meters, while the width of the main facade looking on to the river is about 200 meters and covering a surface of approximately 210,000 square meters.<sup>(4)</sup>

The description of this palace may begin with the principal structure which is still standing; it is known as the Bāb al-‘Āmma.

Bāb al-‘Āmma: This is the only edifice in the Beit al-Califa<sup>(5)</sup> [Fig.9 ].

Johns who visited the site in 1846 says that the entrance was all that was then left standing.<sup>(6)</sup> The three rooms now to be seen formed the central part of the structure. They undoubtedly belonged to the open and public parts of the palace.<sup>(7)</sup>

1. D.P.M., p.17.

2. Ibid., p.17.

3. Ibid., p.17.

4. Ibid., p.17.

5. Bell, Amwrath to Amwrath, p.240.

6. J.R.G.S., (1848) pp.6ff.

7. D.P.M., p.17.

This part as it is seen now consists of a great triple arched facade nearly 12 m. high [see Fig. 9] which overlooks the Tigris.<sup>(1)</sup> It embraced the great coronation hall, the Līwān. The central part consists of a deep open room, forming a great Līwān. Its measurements still remain uncertain. According to Creswell, it is 7.86 m. broad, 17.50 m. deep and 11.10 m. high;<sup>(2)</sup> Viollet gives the measurements as 17 m. in length, 8 m. in width and 11 m. in height (under Key);<sup>(3)</sup> while Herzfeld's measurements are as 8 m. width, 17.5 m. length.<sup>(4)</sup> General de Beylie stated that the entrance vault is 13 m. high, 16 m. long and 8 m. broad.<sup>(5)</sup> According to my own measurements it is 7.68 m. broad and 17.42 m. deep.<sup>(6)</sup>

At the back of this great Līwān is a doorway, 3.75 m. wide and 1.32 m. deep<sup>(7)</sup> [Fig. 10 a,b) which repeats the form of the front arch, and immediately above this is a pointed arched window of average dimensions [Fig. 10]. On both sides of the Līwān lie

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1. E.M.A., II, p.232

2. Ibid., II, p.234.

3. D.P.M., p.18.

4. Herzfeld, Sāmarrā, p.5.

5. Prome et Sāmarrā, p.124.

6. However, the Department of Antiquities in Iraq presents the measurements as 8 m. broad, 17.5 m. deep (see D.A.I., Sāmarrā, p.52.)

7. Figures given above are according to my measurements, but Herzfeld in Samara, p.6, gives as 4 m. wide and 6 m. high, while Creswell in E.M.A., II, p.234 presents the figures as 4 m. wide and 7.10 m. high.

two small deep rooms, not as high as the two large niches,<sup>(1)</sup> each 4.50 m. broad and 4.11 m. deep. The part behind the frontal arch is covered by a semi-dome on squinches. [Fig. 12], between which is a rectangular window. Creswell quoted from Rosintal that the squinches consist of a low cylindrical part, constructed of bricks laid in horizontal courses which continue the courses of the zone between, but the semi-dome is built of rubble on account of the difficulty of constructing such small arches with flat square bricks.<sup>(2)</sup> The semi-cylindrical part is set so that its back and its front edges oversail the wall, whereas the part between is set back behind it. There is no octagonal zone, as at Khoja Kalesi and Rusāfa, for the zone between curves forward to meet the edge of the squinches. As at Fīrūzabād and Sarvistān these lateral Līwāns each form monumental entrances to a barrel-vaulted room of the same width, which lies behind, to which a door 1.75 m. wide and 5.55 m. high gives access. Although these Līwāns are about a meter and a half lower than the central one, the rooms behind them are of nearly the same height (10.80 m. against 11.10 m.)<sup>(3)</sup>

Herzfeld says that high up in the small back wall there is a window.<sup>(4)</sup> The two side rooms which are entered from the front do not communicate with the great Līwān; therefore, as Herzfeld points out, they can have been nothing more than guard rooms.<sup>(5)</sup> Behind the main Līwān the trace of a quadrangular room

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1. D.P.M., p.18.

2. E.M.A., II, p.234.

3. Ibid., p.234.

4. Sāmarrā., p.6.

5. Ibid., p.6.

is still recognisable which can have been spanned only by a flat ceiling upheld by additional supports, because of the weakness of the wall and the wide span of 17 m.

Herzfeld records that John Ross, perhaps saw even more than he did, and he also writes that his reconstruction cannot be regarded as complete observation, because there was not enough surviving to permit a true understanding.<sup>(1)</sup>

The wall to the left of the north-west Līwān is pierced below with a tall narrow window and above with a broader one, both being rectangular. Beam holes in the wall behind show that there were two storeys here, divided by a wooden floor. At the opposite extremity the facade ends with a broken edge, except for a smooth vertical surface, still partly faced with stucco, which does not reach the ground. This shows that there was another rectangular window here, but nearly as tall as its fellow at the opposite end. Creswell concludes that there must have been an upper storey for a piece of wall, nearly 5 m. high was visible some sixty years ago, rising vertically above the north side of the northern Līwān.<sup>(2)</sup>

The Decoration: The decoration of the palace must have been mainly of stucco worked in relief or frescoed. Lying upon the ground were small fragments of plaster bearing a frescoed pattern of

1. Sāmarra., p.6.

2. E.M.A., II, p.234. Creswell points out that it was seen by Herzfeld in 1905 (see Sāmarra., Fig. 3), by Viollet in 1908 (D.P.M., XXI, Pl. XV), and by Gertrude Bell in 1909 (Amurath to Amurath, Fig. 152.)

a simple kind, usually a row of circles outlined in red and yellow; Bell points out that a small piece of moulded stucco was still (in 1909) attached to the inside of the arch over the opening of the central chamber.<sup>(1)</sup>

The walls of the principal rooms were decorated to the height of about forty inches with low relief ornament in stucco forming a dado.<sup>(2)</sup>

The large Līwān and the two contiguous rooms were richly decorated with bandeaux made in the shape of eggs, and with small chains, in the shape of small palms which run along the lines of building.<sup>(3)</sup> The interior of the Līwān was decorated with stucco ornament; part is still in site, and more was found in the debris by Viollet, and later by Herzfeld.<sup>(4)</sup>

Creswell writes<sup>(5)</sup> that: The interior of the frontal arch of the great Līwān was adorned with stucco ornament, divided into a broad central strip and two much narrower borders. The latter, which are 32.5 cm. broad, are composed of a pair of ascending vine tendrils which form a double row of loops, each containing a vine-leaf, the lobes of which are separated by drill-holes, like eyes, surrounded by concentric grooves - so

1. Op.cit., p.241.

2. Herzfeld, Der Wandschmuck Der Bauten Von Samarra, und Seine Ornamentik, pp.217ff.

3. D.P.M., p.18.

4. E.M.A., II, p.234.

5. Ibid., p.234.



characteristic of the so-called "Third style" (Creswell's style A) of Sāmarrā.<sup>(1)</sup> The central strip is 95 cm. broad, has a long-stemmed and rather elongated vine-leaf. Unfortunately the fragments recovered are not sufficient to enable us to say how the centre of the rosettes, or the field between them, was filled except that covered buds occupied the corner of the latter, next to the outer border. Within the great Līwān was a door which Herzfeld has reconstructed from fragments of stucco;<sup>(2)</sup> [See Fig. 13] part of this had already been found by Viollet.<sup>(3)</sup> As he remarks, it is closely related to the famous facade of Mshattā. But Creswell points out that he cannot help thinking that the pieces from which he has composed the square really belong to the soffit of arch, in which case the reconstruction be modified so that a six-lobed rosette comes between each triangle. This would make the resemblance to Mshattā still closer.<sup>(4)</sup>

1. Herzfeld recognizes three styles in the stucco decoration of Sāmarrā, in the first style, the ornament was mostly produced with the help of wooden forms, after which the panels were fastened to the wall. In the second and third styles, characterized by a great freedom of ornament the stucco decoration was cut on the wall. In all the styles the surface to be decorated is entirely covered with ornamentation and the background more or less eliminated. (For details see Herzfeld, Der Wandschmuck Der Bauten Von Sāmarrā und Seine Ornamentik, pp.5-10 and 117; Dimand, Samarra ephemeral, p.88; Creswell, E.M.A., II, p.234; Hameed, The Stucco ornament of Sāmarrā, pp.12-22 (Ph.D. Thesis); Rice, Islamic Art, pp.32-34.
2. Mshatta Hīra und Bādiyā, in the Jahrb. der preussischen Kunstsammlungen, XLII, pp.138f., and der Wandschmuck der Bauten von Sāmarrā und Seine Ornamentik, pp.217-22, Abb. 307-11, and Taf. XCVI.
3. P.M.S., pp.707f (pp.25f).
4. E.M.A., II, pp.234f.

Herzfeld records that the top of the wall, immediately below the offset of the vault, was decorated with a fine fringe in high relief, composed of a larger and smaller motif set alternately. The larger consists of a fluted chalice almost filled by the bull-like base of a three-petalled flower (lotus?) the whole surface of which is treated like a net. The outer petals form bold volutes, but the central one is much more slender and its tip just passes beyond the upper edge of the frieze; the whole somewhat resembles a fleur de lys. The smaller motif is like a reduced edition of the former without the volutes. This frieze as Herzfeld has pointed out, closely resembles the stucco frieze that has been added to the apse of the basilica of sergius at Ruṣāfā.<sup>(1)</sup>

The double arch of the head of the Līwān, which protrudes about 0'm 10 only, had, as the Arabs told Viollet, a beautiful inscription where the names of six Califs could be read. All this central part was built entirely in red baked bricks of small dimension and very resistant  $\frac{\text{om},23 \times \text{om},23}{\text{om},07}$ . The joints are in plaster and quite thick, the walls were coated with plaster (probably tinted) and with ornaments in plaster and stucco. Viollet was able to count 15 different coats of plaster each about 5 cm. thick, and he found as well bricks of larger type in the pavement; they were very thin and whitish:  $\frac{\text{om},35 \times \text{om},35}{\text{om},03}$

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1. See Wandschmuck der Bauten Von Samarra und Seine Ornamentik, p.201 and see also Archaeologische Reise, p.137. The statement mentioned above is quoted from Creswell, E.M.A., II, p.235.

Almost all the walls were made with a mixture of baked and unbaked bricks, which explains why they were robbed by the Arabs who extracted the good bricks for building.<sup>(1)</sup>

This Palace is divided very neatly into two parts, with additions often later than its date of construction: The first part consists of a section devoted to habitation, which is grouped around the ceremonial halls. It is the richest part, being built with care, where decoration was not spared, and where ornament made with the most varied materials, lent great luxury to rooms which were already impressive on account of their vastness. They were almost entirely built of baked bricks, with strong walls measuring from 1 to 2 meters in thickness.

The second part, the garden, was mainly made up of vase esplanades edged with parterres of flowers, with sand pits, grottoes and small buildings, the purpose of which is not always easy to define. All this part, which is generally of unbaked brick, has thick walls, supported by pillars which are sometimes square, most of them set on foundations of baked bricks.

The description of the first part which started behind Bāb al 'Āmma as follows:

Behind the Līwān the throne room, as Viollet calls it, was an enfilade of 5 parallel rooms [See Figs. 5 and 6] each 15 metres long communicating with one another, by a large bay of 3.50 m. wide on the main axis so producing a beautiful effect of perspective. To the north of these 5 rooms was a large peristyle

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1. D.P.M., p.18.

with square pillars opening on to an interior yard of which the centre was intersected by ponds.<sup>(1)</sup> [See Figs. 5 and 6]

Herzfeld regards the last chamber of this group as a hall. He says that the main entrance leads through the middle part of the gateway and through six transverse halls behind it, which must be regarded as a series of antechambers. Privileged visitors could be led through the north-western bay of the gateway and through a long gallery to these antechambers. Communications with the Ḥarīm was arranged, on the contrary, through the south eastern bay and two of the long corridors leading from it. Everything up to this point is merely the Gateway Block, the "Porte".<sup>(2)</sup>

Following up the main axis, comes a large square room with, at its centre, a square architectural feature. Then come two subterranean galleries carved in the rock, which run between them, perpendicular to the main axis. There must undoubtedly have been another succession of parallel rooms, continuing the perspective of which we have already spoken. The composition at the centre must have been very important; if we may judge by its foundations which measure 2.60m. in width.<sup>(3)</sup>

To the right and the left of the part of the plan that we have just described there were interior courts of considerable size,

1. P.M.S., p.10.

2. Herzfeld, Mitteilung, p.200.

3. P.M.S., p.11. This section described by Herzfeld, Mitteilung, p.200, as follows: After (the six transverse halls) comes a square court with a fountain, symmetrically bounded on each side by three rooms in which the stream

which gave light to many of the living rooms. It was on this section of plan that investigations have been mainly centred. Those have revealed the greatest number of decorative fragments; and have helped to determine a number of the interesting methods of construction. Most of the big walls were reinforced by beams of wood; today they are reduced to dust, but they still diffuse the fragrance of sandalwood. This follows a Sassanean procedure used at Tak-i-Kesra; it is not surprising to find it here, as the Moslems have continued using the method till today.<sup>(1)</sup>

The Throne Room: This consists of a square central hall, round which are four T-shaped halls giving the form of a crutch-cross [See Fig. 8]. Fragments of a fine marble frieze were found in the throne room which was almost certainly roofed with a dome.<sup>(2)</sup> Herzfeld writes: T-shaped halls occur in private houses as a usual feature of the reception hall. But, unlike all the other existing examples, the parts which form the actual cross are built like three-aisled basilicas and are therefore somewhat like the Throne-Room at Mashātā four times repeated. The reason is obviously the necessity of providing a clerestorey as a means of admitting light.<sup>(3)</sup> Fragments of stucco decoration from the soffits of these arches which Herzfeld has attempted to piece together, were found in these radiating basilical halls. It must be emphasized that these frag-

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1. P.M.S., pp.11f.

2. E.M.A., II, p.237.

3. Herzfeld, Mitteilung, p.200. The statement forecited is quoted from Creswell's translation in E.M.A., II, p.237.

ments, placed side by side by Herzfeld in his attempt to reconstruct the design, represent not a triple band, but three separate lengths of the same strip. From this same throne-room came a remarkable wooden door-soffit which bears a very striking resemblance to one of the door-soffits of ibn Tūlūn's mosque at Cairo.

Between the arms of the Cross are smaller halls with dadoes of marble tiles, and also a room with the stucco dado which served as a mosque for the Khalif.<sup>(1)</sup>

The Ḥarīm: A transverse axis runs through the central room and the T-shaped rooms to north and south, the continuation of which appears to be approximately symmetrical. Only its southern continuation, the Ḥarīm, has been excavated [See Fig. 8]. In front of the southern T-shaped hall lies first of all a broad hall extending to the full width of the Ḥarīm Court.

The west and east sides of the Ḥarīm Court are occupied by small living-rooms, all provided with a water supply, partly conveyed in great lead pipes, and partly in blue-glazed, partly in rough clay pipe. There were also washing rooms and latrines. Opposite to the Throne-room, on the south side of the Court, and again occupying its full width, is a peculiar square room. This is a square room, with a basin at its centre surrounded by a corridor, 21m. long, on all four sides. The room has four wide

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1. E.M.A., II, pp.237f.



doorways in the axes, and in it there were four marble columns at the corners of the basin.<sup>(1)</sup>

Creswell notes that Herzfeld told him that this was in past the great basin of Egyptian granite and Pharaonic workmanship which is now exhibited in the Courtyard of the Museum of Baghdād.<sup>(2)</sup> This room was decorated all over with paintings of figures, one of which has been reconstructed by Herzfeld from fragments found on the spot.<sup>(3)</sup>

An east to west axis cuts through it, and adjoining it to the west is yet another three-aisled basilica, each aisle of these bays, on four marble columns.<sup>(4)</sup>

The Great Esplanade: In front of the eastern T-shaped hall of the Throne-room group is another great hall, of about 38 m. in length and 10.40 m. in width, which opens onto the great Esplanade by five doors.<sup>(5)</sup> [See Fig. 8] This great open Court, measures about 350 x 180 m. according to Herzfeld,<sup>(6)</sup> and 300 x 200 m. according to Viollet.<sup>(7)</sup> It is surrounded by two boundary walls to north and south and about every 20 metres there are half-circular

1. E.M.A., II, pp.238f.

2. Ibid., II, p.239.

3. Mshatta Hīra and Badiya., pp.132-8, and his Die Molereien Von Samarra, pp.22-9 and Abb. 7.

4. E.M.A., II, p.239.

5. Ibid., II, p.241.

6. Mitteilung., p.199.

7. D.P.M., p.19.



towers in these which serve as buttress. There were several doors in these walls giving access to adjoining constructions which served as barracks and arsenals.<sup>(1)</sup> Viollet points out that this vast esplanade was designed in a way similar to that adopted later in France. Canals ran parallel to the boundary walls and close to these were plots of flowers which in their simplicity of line must have given an impression of greatness; there were pools made of marble and fountains, while various similar motives completed the decor in a very picturesque way.<sup>(2)</sup>

The whole Esplanade was divided by a canal into a paved western part, decorated with two fountains, and an unpaved eastern part interested <sup>fec</sup> by little canals. Its panelled enclosing walls were capped with the crestring.<sup>(3)</sup>

The Little Serdāb; At the eastern extremity of this esplanade stood the little Serdāb [See Figs. 5,6,8], on the main axis of the palace.<sup>(4)</sup> Undoubtedly forming a central point in the complex, the building was used to shelter a cavern.<sup>(5)</sup> The Serdāb itself is a cavity cut in the rock. Herzfeld gives its measurements as 21 m. a side and about 8 m. deep,<sup>(6)</sup> but Viollet gives different figures as 26 m. a side and 10 m. deep.<sup>(7)</sup>

1. Ibid., p.19f.

2. Ibid., p.20.

3. E.M.A., II, p.241.

4. Ibid., II, p.241; and see also D.P.M., p.20.

5. D.P.M., p.20.

6. Mitteilung., p.201; Creswell in E.M.A., II, p.241 quoted Herzfeld's measurements.

7. D.P.M., p.20.

On each side of this cavern, there are three carved grottoes in the rock, grouped around a square courtyard of which the centre was undoubtedly a pond [Fig. 14 a,b.] The general disposition is of peculiar interest because of its search for symmetry. The two pierced bays which face each other and provide a means of communication between the three grottoes by corridors on each side [Fig. 15] leading to the establishment of two niches in the back wall, at the two extremities of the axis of those bays; the same principles with composition of the plan are observed there, as in the rest of the palace. On the north front a gallery of 0.80 m. wide x one m. high emerges at the bottom of the main grotto.<sup>(1)</sup> The entrance staircases of the serdāb are on the west side of the upper building.<sup>(2)</sup>

Viollet points out that he discovered at the extremity of the third grotto of the west front a vault at an angle of  $45^{\circ}$  approximately and he dug to find its exit to the open air.<sup>(3)</sup> This vault was carved in the rock and covered by a coating of plaster.<sup>(4)</sup>

Viollet mentions that he had to clear the two stairs giving access to the serdāb, the steps do not exist any more, but only their traces on the walls which are still coated with their plastered decoration. The steps measured 17 cm. high the tread 32 cm. deep. In clearing these stairs, fragments of decoration in plaster and pieces of marble were found in great quantities.

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1. P.M.S., pp.13f.

2. Herzfeld, Mitteilung., p.201; E.M.A., II, p.241.

3. D.P.M., p.20.

4. Ibid., p.20.

It may be noted that at the north front a search revealed supporting walls of brick, built probably on the occasion of some collapse of the rock. These changed the disposition of the grottoes on this side by reducing the space.

At the bottom of the niche on the opposite side of the same facade in the west front, Viollet discovered another gallery, horizontal this time, which seems to communicate with a hole which is approximately 40 metres from the large cave, in front and just in its axis. This hole is approximately 2 metres wide 10 metres long.<sup>(1)</sup> There are several large ditches which still seem to be dug so precise and neat are their edges and angles. What purpose can one attribute to these ditches which are connected to each other by galleries?

The natives sometimes call this the prison, and sometimes "Birkat as-Sibā'" [The lion's ditch]. Perhaps both of these descriptions are accurate. A lion could live in the large ditch [Fig. 16], and the prisoners could be thrown into the narrow ditch [Fig. 17] where the lion would come to find them through the underground galleries.<sup>(2)</sup> Probably, the name which was given to this place as "Birkat as-Sibā'" The lion's ditch, supported the idea that lions were kept in this place for Ṭabarī records that in the year (255 A.H.) al-Muhtadī ordered that the singers should be deported from Sāmarrā to Baghdād. He also ordered that the lions which were in the Calif's house should be killed.<sup>(3)</sup>

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1. Ibid., p.20.

2. Ibid., p.21.

3. III, p.1736.

The Pool Ground: As far as the middle of the east Court, opposite this ditch, the eastern and the western enclosing walls make a symmetrical bend 70 m. long and they make another one 100 m. further on, of about 80 m., thus forming an extensive rectangle of 500 m. in length and 60 m. in breadth, which is entirely bare. <sup>(1)</sup>

Viollet points out that this sort of large circus seems to have been destined for military exercises, horse races and similar displays. <sup>(2)</sup> It is to be noted that this immense court is gently inclined at an angle of 8 degrees with regard to the general axis. <sup>(3)</sup> Opposite the lodge, on the main axis of the Palace, rises a great high pavilion, overlooking the race course of the zoological gardens (Ḥayr); its track, about 5 Km. long, loses itself in the distance. The middle axis of the Palace by way of the pavilion on the Tigris, the basin, the monumental staircase, the Bāb al-‘Āmma, the kernel of the Palace, the Great Esplanade, and the Little Serdāb, to the pavilion on the race-course measure 1.400 m. <sup>(4)</sup>

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1. D.P.M., p.21. However Herzfeld gives in Mitteilung., p.201, the measurements of the rectangular mentioned above as 530 m. long and about 65 m. broad; Creswell in E.M.A., II, p.241, quoted Herzfeld's measurements.
  2. D.P.M., p.21.
  3. Ibid., p.21.
  4. Herzfeld Mitteilung., p.201. The statement mentioned above Creswell's translation in E.M.A., II. p.241.

The Great Serdāb: A separate walled square of 180 m. a side touching the north-east corner of this Kernel of the Palace, with its south side lying along the north wall of the Great Esplanade. It consists of a deep square cavity of 80 m. a side hewn in the rock, with cruciform extensions on its axes, measuring about 115 m. In the floor of this pit is a second circular hollow of 70 m. diameter. This hollow must have been a basin, for a deep underground canal leads to it. On the upper platform many small irregular rooms are set round the inner side of the walls. A number of them are roofed with intersecting vaults. Discoveries of stores were made in some of these rooms: Chinese ceramics, materials for pavements of a pictorial kind, and gold lustred ceramics. To the east various groups of buildings are set along the north wall among which the middle one rises above the rest. The usual T-shaped reception hall has a rotunda in the place of the transverse arm.<sup>(1)</sup>

Herzfeld concludes that the magnificence of the decoration of the palace was in keeping with this composition, the like of which certainly existed nowhere else. The dadoes of the walls were everywhere decorated with stucco ornament. Amongst them some pieces date from the earliest period of the palace, under al-Mu'taṣim, while others belong to a reconstruction directly after al-Mutawakkil, and others to the last period of Sāmarrā. On the evidence of these it is now possible to distinguish the stylistic developments of this decoration far more clearly than was possible

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1. Ibid., p.201.

after the first campaign. In the Throne-rooms, the stucco dadoes are replaced by similar ones of carved marble. In the rooms between the arms of the Cross, the dado bears a facing of marble. The upper part of the walls in the (Ḥarīm) were adorned with fresco paintings of living figures of which important remains have come to light. In the remaining halls was a decoration not to be seen anywhere else, consisting of rhomboid mother of pearl plates and convex pieces of glass in various patterns. All the woodwork, doors, beams, and ceilings were of teak-wood, carved and painted, or only painted and partly gilded. Delicately wrought-nails of gilt bronze heightened the effect.

Finds of small objects were naturally few in the Gateway-Block and Throne-room, but very numerous in the (Ḥarīm) and other living rooms. Apart from architectural fragments, pottery, and glass, a whole series of completely closed pots of tall cylindrical form were found; they were closed with plaster, and exhibited on one side a framed picture of a man's or woman's figure in various costumes. These pictures may possibly have been portraits. Professor Storm Rice suggests that they were jars for wine and that the inscriptions found on some of them, and perhaps the portraits also, had reference to the vineyards from which the wine came.<sup>(1)</sup> In addition there were sketches for picture and ornament on fragments of pottery, tiles, pieces of marble, and gypsum plaster, marble taps in the form of animals heads, tiles

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1. See Rice, D.S., art. Deacon or drink., Arabica, V, (1958), pp.15-23.



of millefiori-glass, inlaid work of ebony and ivory, and bits of furniture. Amongst the epigraphic finds must be mentioned remains of inscriptions on teak beams, many craftsmen's signatures in Greek, Syriac, and Arabic, writing on marble, wood, paintings and pottery, a fragment of textile with the (ṭirāz) of the Khalīf al-Mu'tamid, bits of letters on paper, and official papyrī. (1)

A large mass of ruins on the axis seems to indicate the existence of some principal construction probably an entrance, at this central point. Traces of a road in a curve indicated by two small slopes which can still be seen from far away in the desert. (2)

The Barracks: At the north west corner of the area we have been describing is a Barracks astride the north wall. It was probably for cavalry. While other barrack buildings for infantry are separated from it by rough, unbuilt-on ground.

Its 600 rooms could have conveniently provided accommodation for 3,000 men. In the great Court lie three masjids (mosques) with inaccurate qiblas, merely following the general orientation of this part of the building. The Barracks, owing to their high position, dominated the garden and the Tigris bank, and they flanked the "Great Street" which led away between them from the Palace area, forming the only communication between the south of the town and the north. (3)

1. Ibid., pp.202-204.

2. D.P.M., pp.21f.

3. Herzfeld, Mitteilung., p.199; E.M.A., II, p.242.



## B - THE BUILDING OF AL-ḤUWAYSILAT

The ruins of this site are situated on the western side of the Tigris about 17 Km. north of Sāmarrā railway station,<sup>(1)</sup> exactly in the plain which lies on the left bank of the river al-Isḥaqī.<sup>(2)</sup>

The site was discovered by one of the employers who was working in the railway station of Sāmarrā; he found some pieces of stucco which were adorned with beautiful decoration. Then the Department of Antiquities sent an inspector to excavate the site, and he noticed that the arrangement of the mounds indicated that they obscured an immense building surrounded by special enclosure, when the Department of Antiquities decided to excavate at Samarra, it was suggested that the excavations should be started there at the site of al-Ḥuwaysilat.

The digging began on 10th April 1936 and continued about two months. The work brought to light the middle and the southern parts of the palace, as well as a great deal of stucco which decorated the lower part of most of the rooms. Work continued in June of the following year. The other part of the palace was revealed, and other buildings, which might have been annexed to the Palace, were discovered [See Fig. 18].

It is interesting to note here that neither the Arabic Sources nor more recent authors take this palace into account. The

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1. D.A.I., Ḥafriyyat Sāmarrā, p.9; R.S., I, p.87.

2. R.S., I, p.87.

only information we have is the report of the expedition of the Iraqi Department of Antiquities.

The Palace, in general, is a square in plan, about 140 m. each side, surrounded by a wall enclosure measuring 370 m. each side. Thus the Palace itself comprises an area of about 19,600 square m. while the whole area engaged by the Palace and its garden and enclosure is 134,900 square m.

The north-west corner of the palace was washed away by the Tigris, and the external wall as well as the northern side of the interior has completely vanished, but the southern quarter of the eastern side of the wall is still standing. [See fig. 17/19]

The Plan: Exactly in the centre of the Palace, was a huge square hall, measuring 15.40 m. each side, the walls of this hall are quite strong and about 2.20 m. thick. We may conclude that they carried a high dome, and it was thought that the light entered the hall through windows constructed in the base of the dome.

At the middle of each side the central hall was connected to four oblong halls each about 16.60 m. in length 6.60 m. in width by four big entrances measuring 3.60 m.

Each of the four oblong halls are connected also at the middle of its side, to an oblong hall or corridor and this, in its turn, had two symmetrical doors (openings) on the long sides.

Four cabins stretch before the twin door of each corridor. These cabins face the yard between the Palace and the outer fence.

Apart from that, two rooms exist at two sides of each Iwān. These rooms lead to the Sahn (courtyard). Also at the end of each oblong hall, which surrounds the central saloon exists a square chamber joining one hall to another.

This portion of the building is completely symmetrical. The area at the axis of the cross was turned into Courtyards. These Courtyards were as follows:

In the south eastern section, between the eastern Sahn and the southern one, the main courtyard was divided into ten sub-courtyards, each sub-courtyard had a separate entrance and was composed of 6-8 rooms, a bathroom and a private lavatory. Some of the entrances of the sub-courtyards led to the passage which extended along the internal enclosure. Other entrances led to a private passage which was perpendicular to the former passage and communicated with the heart of the palace.

The sector between the western Sahn and the southern one was planned completely differently from the one mentioned above. It consisted of enormous halls and baths instead of sub-courtyards. While the sector between the northern Sahn and the western one was planned and constructed as an image of the south east one. No trace of the construction of the north east region of the palace survives. It is believed that it was an exact repetition of the south west region, this assumption it would appear that the plan of the palace achieved complete symmetry.

The Enclosure: The enclosure which surrounded the palace was flanked by 100 towers, 4 of them were large and circular and the rest were small and rectangular.

Excavations brought to light the two towers at the eastern and western corner of the southern wall. The diameter of the towers was about 3 metres. The two towers of the northern wall were probably similar to the ones mentioned above. The rest of the towers were distributed so that there were 12 between each circular corner tower and the gate on each side of the square.

These small towers were prismatic in shape, with a rectangular base, 1.40 m. x 2 m. What attracts attention is that they are not attached to the wall, but on the contrary are separated by a space of 80 cm.

There is no doubt whatsoever that these towers were joined to the wall by special arches at a certain elevation from the ground, though there are no marks left to estimate the height of these.

Regarding the external enclosure only 2 towers were discovered, 25 m. apart and each has a diameter of 8 m.

Building Materials: The central parts of the palace, i.e. the large saloon and the halls together with the Iwans surrounding it, were constructed with the use of bricks 25 x 25 x 7 cm. and gypsum. The rest of the palace and the enclosure was built of a mixture of stones and gypsum, similar to concrete.

For the foundations, ash and lime were used instead of gypsum and stones, while the outer enclosure was constructed of clay.

Floor Furnishing: The floor of the halls and sahns (courtyards) was surfaced with square bricks. The dimensions of these in most of the halls was 0.36 x 0.36 m., and the floors when excavated proved to be in a good enough condition to indicate the precision with which the bricks were laid as well as their excellent quality.

The rest of the Palace floor was made up of a layer of gypsum mixed with sand. In the bathrooms and lavatories, a layer of tar was found on top of the gypsum.

Wall Paintings: The walls in general were covered with stucco, the lower parts of which were in the main halls were adorned with carved patterns. These extend to a level of at the most 0.1 m. above the ground, though at the sides of the entrance it is more, and it would seem that these decorations framed the entrance.

Most of the rooms were undecorated, except that elevating on either side of the doors there were some gypsum frames consisting of different figures.

Below the plaster the walls were covered with a layer of tar, the purpose of which, apparently, was to keep dampness away from the decorations.

A number of nails were discovered projecting from the walls, behind the plaster; these were probably used to ensure the security of the plaster.

Neither the tar nor the nails were used in any of the ruins of Sāmarrā to the east of Tigris, the reason for this is perhaps to be found in the fact that the land on the western bank of the Tigris compared was lower than on the east bank, so that there were extensive parks and gardens there. This naturally exposed all the buildings to the effect of dampness; and these precautions were resorted to avoid it.<sup>(1)</sup>

Identification and Name: I have mentioned above, that no information has been discovered by historians relating to this palace; neither has its name survived, nor is there any description of it.

The Department of Antiquities in Iraq called al-Ḥuwaysilat after local name of the site tel al-Ḥuwayslat [The Mound of Vesicles] but certainly that was not its original name.

It is important to record that Ya'qūbī in his record mentions the existence of buildings on the west bank of the Tigris in the time of al-Mu'taṣim. He says: "After al-Mu'taṣim had finished marking out the town and laying the foundation for building on the east side of the Tigris, the side on which Sāmarrā stands, he threw a bridge over to the west bank, and made farms, orchards, and gardens there. He dug canals from the Tigris and entrusted each captain with the development of an area."<sup>(2)</sup> No details are given about these buildings in his

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1. D.A.I., Ḥafriyyat Sāmarrā, pp.9-16.

2. Buldān., p.38.

account nor are their names recorded, but Suhraḇ, in his account of the river of al-Iṣḥafī mentions a palace known as "Qaṣr al-Juṣṣ" [The Palace of Gypsum]. He says: "A river called al-Iṣḥafī takes its water from the western bank of the Tigris; starting a little way down from Tikrit, it passes to the west of the Tigris where some buildings and plantation were located. It then passes through Ṭirahān where it comes to the palace of al-Mu'taṣim known as Qaṣr al-Juṣṣ."<sup>(1)</sup> The Department of Antiquities of Iraq favours the idea that the palace brought to light by the excavations on the site of al-Ḥuwaysilat corresponds to the one mentioned by Suhraḇ.<sup>(2)</sup>

#### C - IṢṬABLĀT CAMP

The ruins of Istablat camp are situated on the western bank of the Tigris, 15 kilometres to the south of the present city of Sāmarrā.<sup>(3)</sup> [Fig. 20, map No.4]

Susa writes: Originally it consisted of two rectangles, a small one 500 m. x 215 m. joined to a large one 1700 m. x 550 m. Both areas were surrounded by an enclosing wall reinforced by towers. The small sector was divided into chains of regular courtyards, while the large one was subdivided into 3 equal sections separated by walls similar to the outer enclosure. [Fig. 21]

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1. A.A.S., p.127; However the palace of Gypsum described by Yaḳūt in Mu'jam., IV, p.110 as follows: "Qaṣr al-Juṣṣ is a great palace near Sāmarrā, situated above al-Harunī which al-Mu'taṣim constructed for excursion."
  2. D.A.I., Ḥafriyyat Sāmarrā, p.11.
  3. D.A.I. Sāmarrā, p.73; R.S., I, p.93.



The eastern subsector is still completely standing. Two intersecting main roads run perpendicularly to the walls and serve to link them one to another. The four areas so formed are further subdivided into smaller sections by several other parallel roads. There is less construction in the middle subsector of the large rectangle, while in the western one there is nothing standing apart from traces of the roads. It is obvious that Istablat was a large military camp comprising houses for Commanders, barracks for soldiers, and fields for tents. What attracts attention is that the longer sides of the two rectangles are aligned exactly in the direction of the geographical north.

The whole camp was surrounded by a long external wall starting in the north on the western bank of the Tigris at the place called Tel Bandrī [See Fig. 20], a hill which is situated 10 Kilometres south of the present town of Sāmarrā. This wall extended for 26 kilometres west of the camp and ended on the south at the western bank of the Tigris near the monumental hill known as Tel Mas'ūd.<sup>(1)</sup> This wall was strengthened by many towers situated at the main entrance of the camp and at the bends of the wall.

Two of these towers were placed at Tel Bandrī and Tel Mas'ūd, at the ends of the wall where it met the Tigris.

The area of the camp which included the barracks inside the wall is about 58 square Km. (about 23,000 acres) in area.

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1. Tel Mas'ūd is situated as Susa records, R.S., I, p.94, about 13 kilometres south of Tel Bandrī.

After leaving Tel Bendrī at the corner of the river the wall extends for about 1200 m. southwards with slight deviation towards the west [see Fig. 20, Map. No.4]. Therefore it bends westwards for 600 m. forming a triangle, with one of its sides, to the north and one to the south, while the base is formed by the opening between the two former sides. The Ishāqī stream which runs from the north marks the northern corner at the apex of the triangle approaches the wall and runs parallel with it on the outside till the wall ended in the south east section. There is a main gate at the end of the southern side of the triangle, facing the Qibla. Traces of the gate and the bridge over the Ishāqī still exist.

The remains of the gate form a mound of bricks and gypsum, but the bridge which was on the west side of the gate was completely destroyed.

From the gate the wall stretches towards the south east on a zigzag course for 5,600 Km. approaching the south western boundary of the rectangular camp at a distance of 200 m. from that corner. At this point on the wall is a main entrance to the camp and the barracks, with the ruins of a tower beside it. On the outer side were constructed two crossings over the Ishāqī river and its branch, which run parallel to the wall. The barracks therefore form a rectangular section stretching along the camp between the wall and river Tigris except for the 200 m. opening between the south western corner of the building and the wall. From here the wall continues toward the south east in the

form of an arc for 6 Km. covering this distance it reaches a sharp corner which is followed by a straight section for 2,700 Km. The next 1,900 Km. runs straight towards the east and then bends towards the north east for 3,400 Km.

In this last area are situated two entrances to the camp with traces of the protective towers still visible. The wall in this section is at its farthest distance from the Tigris, that is about 7 Km. The last section of the wall stretches towards the north with a slight inclination towards the west approaching the bank of the Tigris. At the corner where this section joins the previous one traces of a large tower were found. The wall extends over 4,200 Km., reaching Tel Mas'ūd which is within the wall to where it approaches the river. The present Dujayl river runs one Km. south of Tel Mas'ūd through the wall and the main Baghdād-Sāmarrā railway line and road pass across the wall 2 Km. south of the Dujayl river.

At the corner between the last two sections of the wall there is another tall wall known as 'Arkūb al-Muṭbak, constructed with sun-dried bricks. It stretches from the western bank of the Tigris near the present Imam al-Khiḍr, towards the south-west as far as the desert land [Mesopotamian] between the two rivers, Tigris and Euphrates. Behind the wall on the western side a trench was dug to extract water from the Tigris and forming a water barrier parallel to the wall. This wall was also strengthened by huge towers. It is believed that the wall was built before the Arab period.<sup>(1)</sup>

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1. R.S., I, pp.93-97.

C H A P T E R      I V

‘ABBĀSID ARCHITECTURE AT SĀMARRĀ IN THE  
REIGN OF AL-MUTAWAKKIL

## A - THE PERIOD OF AL-WATHIQ

Al-Wathiq was proclaimed successor on the same day on which his father Mu'taṣim died.<sup>(1)</sup> His name was Hārūn al-Wathiq, but he was generally known as Abū Ja'far. His mother was a Byzantine called Qaraṭīs.<sup>(2)</sup>

Wathiq did not continue to live throughout his reign in Jawsāq al-Khāqānī, but it appears from historical evidence that he built himself a palace named al-Harūnī, on the Tigris river. It consisted of two ballasts a western bench and an Eastern.<sup>(3)</sup>

It seems that Wathiq's reign (227 - 232 A.H./841 - 846 A.D.) was quiet from the political point of view, in comparison with that of Mu'taṣim and he added little to the monuments which already existed at Sāmarrā<sup>(4)</sup>.

We may therefore regard this as the poorest period of the Abbāsid rule at Sāmarrā both architecturally and politically. There are however some historical incidents worth mentioning in his period.

In the year (230 A.H./844 A.D.) when the nomads of Banū Salīm attacked the inhabitants of a Medina suburb, Wathiq sent an army led by Ḥammād bin Jarir aṭ-Ṭabarī to fight them. In the first battle called "al-Ruwatha" Banū Salīm was successful and the leader Ḥammad was killed. The nomads became more dangerous,

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1. Ta'rikh, II, p.168; Ṭabarī, III, p.1329; Murūj, VII, p.145; Kāmil, VI, p.376.

2. Ṭabarī, III, p.1329; Murūj, VII, p.145; Kāmil, VI, p.376.

3. Ta'rikh, II, pp.171f.

4. Except al-Harūnī palace.

so Wathiq sent against them his Turkish Commander, Bugha al-Kabīr [The Elder] who fought and defeated them. They were promised their lives on condition that they surrendered. Bugha imprisoned them in House of Yazīd ibn Mu'awiyah. Ṭabarī adds in the account of the year (231 A.H./845 A.D.), that these prisoners made a hole in the wall of the jail and escaped. But the people of Medina caught them and killed them.<sup>(1)</sup>

In the year (231 A.H.) the people of 'Umru ibn 'Aṭa' suburb proclaimed Aḥmad bin Naṣr al-Khaza'ī as Caliph.<sup>(2)</sup> An uprising was arranged for the night of Thursday third of Sha'ibān (231 A.H.) but Muḥammad bin Ibrāhīm<sup>(3)</sup> arrested all the leaders and put them in prison. Aḥmad bin Naṣr and some of his leaders were transported to Wathiq at Sāmarrā, where he was tried and condemned in the presence of Wathiq and then put to death.<sup>(4)</sup>

In the year (232 A.H./846 A.D.) Wathiq died on 24th day from Dhu-l-Ḥijja.<sup>(5)</sup> The cause of death as Ṭabarī mentions<sup>(6)</sup> was dropsy. To cure this he was placed in a heated room, and as he found that he was getting better, he ordered the heat to be

1. Ṭabarī, III, pp.1339f.

2. Aḥmad bin Naṣr al-Khaz'ī his grandfather was Malik bin al-Haythama one of 'Abbāsīd leader.

3. Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm, he was as Ṭabarī says, III, p.1345, a governor of Baghdād in place of his brother Ishaq ibn Ibrāhīm.

4. See Ṭabarī, III, pp.1343-1348.

5. Ta'rikh, II, p.172; and Buldān, p.40; Ṭabarī, III, p.1363; Kāmil, VII, p.19; Ibn 'Imad, Shadharat, II, p.75.

6. III, p.1363; Kāmil, VII, p.19.

increased the next day, and he stayed in the room longer. But the temperature was far too high, so that he had to be taken out on a stretcher, and he never recovered.

#### B - THE PERIOD OF AL-MUTAWAKKIL

Mutawakkil was proclaimed Caliph in the year (232 A.H./ 846 A.D.).<sup>(1)</sup> It appears from one of Ṭabarī's traditions<sup>(2)</sup> that the senior officials<sup>(3)</sup> of the state decided at first to proclaim Muḥammad the son of Wathiq, who was still a youth, but Waṣif objected. There was an argument, after which it was agreed that Mutawakkil should be Caliph; so they told Bugha ash-Sharabī to announce the news of his succession.

According to the opinions both of Ṭabarī and Ibn Athīr, he was twenty six years old when he became Caliph.<sup>(4)</sup>

His name was Ja'far bin Muḥammad bin Hārūn.<sup>(5)</sup> At first the surname given to him was al-Muntaṣir bi-llāh,<sup>(6)</sup> but on the suggestion of Aḥmad ibn-Abī Dā'ūd this name was soon changed to al-Mutawakkil 'ala llāh and new Calif agreed that this name

1. Ta'rikh, II, p.172; Ṭabarī, III, p.1368; Muruj, VII, p.189; Kāmil, VII, p.22; Ibn 'Imad, Shadharat, II, p.76.

2. III, p.1368.

3. They were as Ṭabarī mentions, III, p.1368, Aḥmad ibn Abi Dā'ūd, Itakh, Waṣif, 'Umar ibn Faraj, ibn az-Zayāt and Aḥmad bin Khālid.

4. Ṭabarī, III, p.1369; Kāmil, VII, p.23. But Mas'ūdī in Murūj, VII, p.189, declared that he was twenty seven years old when proclaimed.

5. Ṭabarī, III, p.1368.

6. Ṭabarī, III, p.1363; Murūj, VII, p.189; Kāmil, VII, p.23.



should be accepted as his new throne-name.<sup>(1)</sup>

Mutawakkil chose to live in the palace of Harūnī, which he preferred to all of Mu'taṣim's palaces.<sup>(2)</sup> He installed his son Muntaṣir in the Mu'taṣim's palace which was known as Jawsaq al-Khaqānī, his son Ibrāhīm al-Muayyad in Maṭira, and his son Mu'tazz at Balkuwārā,<sup>(3)</sup> which was situated on the eastern side of Maṭira.<sup>(4)</sup>

Among the important political events of his reign was the escape of Muḥammad ibn al-Ba'ith<sup>(5)</sup> in the year (234 A.H./848 A.D.) from his prison. He reached Marand<sup>(6)</sup> in the district of Adharbaijān where he was joined by a great number of followers and helpers. Mutawakkil sent Ḥamdawaih bin 'ali to Adhrabaijan to resist him, but Muḥammad ibn Ba'ith took refuge in Marand which was well protected and supplied to outlast a long siege. Mutawakkil then sent the commanders Zarak the Turkish, and 'Amr ibn Sesal, both of whom failed in their objective.

1. Ibid., Ibid., Ibid.

2. Buldān, p.40; Futūḥ., p.460; Mu'jam, III, p.17.

3. About Balkuwārā, see in details section (d) from the fourth chapter of this thesis.

4. Buldān, p.40.

5. He was at that time a prisoner having been brought from Adharbaijān.

6. Marand was as Yāqūt says in Mu'jam, IV, p.503, well-known city of Adharbaijan, it was razed to the ground when the Kurj pillaged it. Yāqūt quoted a statement from Balādhurī, that Muḥammad bin al-Ba'ith built a palace on its site.

After that Mutawakkil sent another army led by Bugha ash-Sharabī who captured the city and Muḥammad ibn al-Ba'īeth.<sup>(1)</sup>

In the year (235 A.H./849 A.D.) Mutawakkil appointed his three sons<sup>(2)</sup> successors to the throne, it seems from the statements given by Ṭabarī,<sup>(3)</sup> that Mutawakkil gave each of them a new name of which they were called after his death. Muḥammad was known as al-Muntaṣir, Abū 'Abdallah ibn Qabiḥa as al-Mu'tazz and Ibrāhīm as al-Mu'ayyād.

It is very clear from Ṭabarī's report,<sup>(4)</sup> that Mutawakkil divided the supervision of whole parts of the Abbāsīd Empire between his three sons, Muntaṣir was given the district of Ifriqiyya and the West Maghrib from 'Arish in Egypt to Balach Sultana in the Maghrib and other places;<sup>(5)</sup> Mu'tazz received the eastern districts of the Empire,<sup>(6)</sup> and Mu'ayyad some districts in Syria.<sup>(7)</sup>

1. See for details Ṭabarī, III, pp.1379-1382; Kāmil, VII, pp.27-29.
2. Ta'rikh, II, p.174; Ṭabarī, III, p.1394; Mas'ūdī in Murūj, VII, p.193 does not mention the date of this appointment. Kāmil, VII, p.23.
3. III, p.1395; and also see Murūj, VII, p.193; Kāmil, VII, p.23.
4. III, p.1395.
5. Other districts given to Muntaṣir were, jund Qinsiren, Capital and ports of Syria, Diyar Muḍar, Diyar Rabi'a, Heet, 'Annat, Khabur, Qaraqisya, Kur Bājarma, Tikrit, etc.,....
6. They were Kur Khurasan, Tibristan, Ray, Armenia, Adhrabaijan Kur Fars. Then he was given in the year 240 A.H./854 A.D. the storing of treasure house in whole districts and Mints.
7. They were Damascus jund, Ḥims jund, Jordan jund, and Palestine jund.

It appears from historical evidence that Mutawakkil bore some enmity against the dhimmis, that is free non-Muslim subjects living in Muslim countries who in return for paying the capital tax enjoyed protection and safety; but the evidence does not indicate why he took severe measures against them. The texts record that Mutawakkil ordered that all churches built since the commencement of Islam should be demolished.

He forbade the employment of Christians in Government office, and the display of crosses on palm Sunday; he also gave orders that wooden figures of demons should be fixed on their doors, that they should wear yellow cowls, and a Zonarion round the waist, that they should ride saddles with wooden stirrups with two globes behind the saddle, that the men's clothes should have inserted a couple of patches of colour different from that of the clothes themselves, each patch to be four inches wide, and the two patches were also to be different colours.<sup>(1)</sup>

Apparently he not only hated the dhimmis, but some of the Muslims too, notably the Shiites. Thus in the year (236 A.H./ 850 A.D.) he ordered that the tomb of Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī<sup>(2)</sup> in Kerbala should be pulled down as well as all the houses surrounding it, and that the site of the tomb should be ploughed up and sown and watered.

1. For details see, Ta'rikh, II, pp.174; Ṭabarī, III, pp.138f and 1419; Maqrīzī, II, 494; Kāmil, VII, p.34 and 47; ibn 'Imād, Shaḍarat, II, p.82; Khalidūn, III, p.275.
2. Ḥusayn son of 'Alī who was the son-in-law of the prophet, and he was also the fourth Calif of Rāshidīn, (The Orthodox Califs) - Ḥusayn's mother was Fāṭima.

People were forbidden to visit it<sup>(1)</sup> and the police-chief there declared that if anybody was found at the grave after three days he would be sent to "The Maṭbaq"<sup>(2)</sup>. The people kept away from it.

In the year (237 A.H./851 A.D.) the people of Armenia rose up against their 'Abbāsīd governor Yūsuf ibn Muḥammad. Ṭabarī relates that the reason was as follows:

A patrician called Buqraṭ ibn Ashwāṭ well-known - Patriarch of the Patriarchs - revolted against the rule of Yūsuf ibn Muḥammad, Muḥammad had him arrested and sent to Mutawakkil at Sāmarrā, where he and his son became Muslims. While the Patriarch was on his way to Sāmarrā, some of Armenia Patriarchs were blockading Yūsuf and his followers. Yūsuf was killed and the others were arrested.<sup>(3)</sup>

When the news reached Sāmarrā, Mutawakkil sent Bugha ash-Sharabī to Armenia, where he did battle and killed a great many of them. Ṭabarī adds that Bugha burnt the city of Armenia.<sup>(4)</sup>

In the year (238 A.H./852 A.D.) Mutawakkil went out towards Baghdād. Arabic sources make no such mention of the journey. Ya'qūbī relates<sup>(5)</sup> that he rested first in Shammāsīyah, then he

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1. Ṭabarī, III, p.1407; Kāmil, VII, p.36; Ibn 'Imād, *op.cit.*, II, p.86; ibn 'Imād adds that Mutawakkil hated 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭalib intensely.
  2. Maṭbaq a famous prison in Baghdād which Maṣṣūr built when he erected his capital "The Round City" inside its enclosure.
  3. III, pp.1408f.
  4. Ibid., p.1415.
  5. *Ta'rikh*, II, p.176.

went through Baghdād on his way to Mada'in.<sup>(1)</sup> The purpose of his journey was, as Ya'qūbī says, for recreation.

In the year 240 A.H./854 A.D. the people of Ḥims<sup>(2)</sup> revolted against their governor, Abū-l-Mughith ar-Raf'ī for having killed one of its citizens. They drove out the governor killing some of his soldiers. Consequently Mutawakkil dispatched 'Attab ibn 'Attab accompanied by 'Abdawāh Kardas al-Anbarī - instead of Abū-l-Mughith, and they accepted him. But in the year 241 A.H./855 A.D. they rebelled again against 'Abdawah, Mutawakkil ordered 'Attab bin 'Attab to fight them, assisting him with soldiers from the garrison of Damascus, and treating them cruelly by beating three of their chiefs to death and sending him twenty of their chiefs in irons.<sup>(3)</sup>

In the year (241 A.H./855 A.D.) Theodora, empress of Byzantium, sent George Firnamis to redeem Muslims who were imprisoned by the Byzantines, according to Ṭabarī they numbered as many as 20 thousand captives, so Mutawakkil sent Naṣr ibn al-Azhar, to count them and to arrange a truce for five nights in order to complete the redemption.

1. Mada'in, a mediaeval Arab town or rather a group of towns in Iraq about 20 miles S.E. of Baghdād lying on either side of the Tigris in two almost equal portions. See E.I./I, III, p.75. art. "Madā'in".
2. Ḥims it is as Yāqūt says in Mu'jam, II, p.334, famous ancient city, placed between Damascus and Ḥalab, it has an inaccessible castle built by the Greeks. Abu 'Ubaida ibn al-Jarāḥ opened it in the time of 'Umar, it contains the house of Khālīd ibn al-Walīd - famous leader Muslim - and his grave.
3. Ṭabarī, III, pp.1420-1423; Kāmil, VII, p.49.

Ṭabarī says this release took place in the Byzantines state on the river called Allamīs on Sunday 12th of Shawal (241 A.H.).<sup>(1)</sup> The number of the captives redeemed were, as Ṭabarī and ibn Athīr relate, 785 men and 125 women.<sup>(2)</sup>

In the year (241 A.H.) Mutawakkil sent Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdallah al-Qumī, to fight al-Bujah.<sup>(3)</sup> A peace treaty was made between them and the Muslims. Their country was rich in gold. A condition of the agreement was that they had to give one fiftieth of the gold they extracted to the governor of the Caliph, but at the time of Mutawakkil they broke their promise and stopped giving Kharaj al-Ma‘ādin, and also they murdered some Muslims who were working in the mine. The rest of the Muslim workers left and as a result of this, Mutawakkil deliberated fighting them, but was advised that it was impossible on account of the difficult terrain. But as their maltreatment of the Muslims increased, Mutawakkil ordered al-Qumī to march against them, and he was joined by some of the Muslims, who were working in the mines. Their King ‘Ali Baba, met him with a great army. After a fierce battle, the Muslim army was victorious, and Bujāt was pursued to the mountains, till he was obliged to ask for peace. This request was granted on the condition that he

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1. For details see Ṭabarī, III, pp.1426-1428; and Kāmil, VII, p.50, but ibn Athīr points out that Mutawakkil sent Sharif (the servant) to direct the transaction.
  2. III, p.1428; Kāmil, VII, p.50.
  3. Al-Bujah, as Ṭabarī records III, p.1428, they were a sort of Abyssinian (Ethiopian) race of Western Sudan.



paid Muslims the Kharaj al-ma'ādin for the four years during which payment had been stopped. After that he was taken to Mutawakkil who received him with great respect.<sup>(1)</sup>

Some Arabic sources point out that Mutawakkil's desire was to leave Sāmarrā, and to search for another place to adopt as the capital of the 'Abbāsid state. These sources do not enlighten us as to the reasons and factors which compelled him to form such a resolution. This decision was not the result merely of an abstract desire to exact something which would perpetuate his memory - a desire which preoccupied many of the other Califs - rather it arose from his wish to establish his position, as clear from the text of Ya'qūbī who records that Mutawakkil's joy was perfect and he said "Now I know I am indeed a King for I have built myself a town and live in it."<sup>(2)</sup>

Mutawakkil had actually set out from Sāmarrā for Damascus where he arrived on Ṣafar of year (244 A.H.) His journey took about ninety-seven days.<sup>(3)</sup>

According to the accounts of both Ṭabarī and ibn Athīr<sup>(4)</sup> Mutawakkil had actually resolved to reside in Damascus and to transfer thither the administrations, he even went so far as to order buildings to be set up in Damascus. However, it appears

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1. For details, see Ṭabarī, III, pp.1428-1433; Kāmil, VII, pp.50-52.

2. Buldān, p.42.

3. Ṭabarī, III, p.1436; Kāmil, VII, p.55.

4. Ibid., III, p.1436; Ibid, VII, p.55.



from the historical records, that he soon changed his mind and stopped the building. The Arabic references also do not give any clear explanation for this change of mind, though both Ṭabarī and ibn Athīr mention that Mutawakkil decided to leave the country firstly because the weather in Damascus was too cold, because of secondly the wind which started to blow in the afternoon and became stronger and more severe with the advance of night. Thirdly because there were a lot of mosquitoes there, and lastly because the prices were too high.<sup>(1)</sup> However, Mutawakkil stayed rather more than two months in Damascus, and then he went back to Sāmarrā, by way of the Euphrates road, Anbar and al-Ḥurf,<sup>(2)</sup> he arrived at Sāmarrā on 23rd of Jamada al-akhira (244 A.H.)<sup>(3)</sup>

It seems that Mutawakkil had, like his predecessors Manṣūr and Mu'taṣim, a great desire to immortalise himself by building a special city which would bear his name and preserve his memory. Not long after his return from Damascus in the year (245 A.H./ 859 A.D.) he ordered the building of al-Maḥuza.<sup>(4)</sup>

This will be considered later in this thesis, when I deal with 'Abbāsīd architecture at Sāmarrā in the region of al-Mutawakkil.

1. Ṭabarī, III, p.1436; Kāmil, VII, p.55.
2. Al-Ḥurf, it was as Yāqūt says in Mu'jam, II, p.243, a Ristaq from Anbar's suburb.
3. Ṭabarī, III, p.1436; Kāmil, VII, p.55.
4. Maḥuza, it was as Ya'qūbī records in Buldān, p.41, the place which has been chosen by Muḥammad bin Mūsā and some engineers when Mutawakkil intended to build a city.

Mutawakkil apparently moved from Sāmarrā before starting to build his new city for Ṭabarī records<sup>(1)</sup> that he moved to al-Muḥammadiyya<sup>(2)</sup> in order to superintend and look after the work.

Some of the buildings, it would seem, had already been finished, according to the reports of the Arabic historians, and the new city was known either as al-Mutawakkiliyya or al-Ja'fariya after its builder.<sup>(3)</sup>

Mutawakkil did not enjoy a long stay in his new city for he was murdered in year (247 A.H./861 A.D.) at his palace of al-Ja'farī,<sup>(4)</sup> Almost all of the Arabic sources agree that he was murdered by the order and direction of his son al-Muntaṣir.

It is not too hard to trace the origins of the plot which was responsible for finishing the lives both of Mutawakkil and of his minister al-Fat'h ibn Khāqān.

It appears that certain Turkish leaders were afraid of the power of Mutawakkil and resented his authority, knowing that if he was angry with anyone he would not rest till he had destroyed him, as he did in the case of two of his ministers, Aḥmad ibn Abī Dā'ūd

1. III, p.1438.

2. Muḥammadiyya, as Yāqūt says in Mu'jam, IV, p.430, and ibn 'Abd al-Ḥaqq in Maraṣid, III, p.51. It was known first as Dayr abī Ṣufra (they are a part of Khawarij), then it was known as Ittakhīya, according to Ittakh the Turk, then after that Mutawakkil called it Muḥammadiyya, after the name of his son Muḥammad al-Muntaṣir.

3. Both Yāqūt in Mu'jam, IV, p.413, and Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥaqq in Maraṣid, III, p.40 record that the Calif named Mutawakkiliyya, as-ja'farī, but both Ṭabarī, III, p.1438; and ibn Athīr in Kāmil, recorded that he named al-Maḥuaz as ja'farī.

4. See Ta'rikh, II, p.178, and Buldān, p. 42; Mu'jam, IV, p.413; ibn 'Abd al-Ḥaqq. Maraṣid, III, p.40.

and Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Malik az-Zayāt, and as he also killed Ittakh the Turk.<sup>(1)</sup>

Mutawakkil indeed resented the powerful influence of some of the Turkish officials who still dreamt of returning to the glory which they had enjoyed under the rule both of Mu'taṣim and Wathīq.<sup>(2)</sup>

Perhaps, Mutawakkil had already seriously considered the idea that every nationality should be equally represented in the 'Abbāsīd army. He wanted to put Arabs, Turks, Ashrusnaḥs and Maghribis on equal terms. In fact when he was at Sāmarrā, at the beginning of his reign this was difficult owing to the size of the contingent which was too large to control.

In my opinion his switch from Sāmarrā to Damascus in year (244 A.H.) was due to this, though he did not tell anyone what was in his mind. Indeed Ṭabarī records<sup>(3)</sup> that he decided to settle transfer the capital to Damascus from Sāmarrā, The Turkish element in his army began to stir up trouble. Arabic sources do not give any full picture of the deep and secret factors of their discontent though Ṭabarī mentions that Turkish

1. Ittakh the Turk, as ibn Athīr mentions in Kāmil, VII, p.29 Mu'taṣim bought him in (199 A.H.), he was brave so both of Mu'taṣim and Wathīq had approached him. Later he became one of the Turkish leaders, Mutawakkil in the year (235 A.H.) ordered Ishāq ibn Ibrāhīm, governor of Baghdād to kill Ittakh.
2. It seems that Mutawakkil began confiscating some of their lands (allotments) for Ṭabarī records III, p.1452, that Mutawakkil ordered in the year (247 A.H.) to take the lands of Waṣīf at Isfahān and Jabal.
3. III, p.1436.

troops insisted on the payment of their salaries, and Mutawakkil satisfied them.

It seems clear that Mutawakkil felt that the Turkish soldiers and leaders disapproved of his residence in Damascus, where Arab influence was to the fore, but he was powerless to resist and so came back to Sāmarrā. But the Turks in Sāmarrā remained full of spite against Mutawakkil and waited for a favourable opportunity to take his life.

At last they found in Muntaṣir - who was heir apparent to the throne - a supporter and instigator, and within a short time Mutawakkil and his minister Faṭḥ ibn Khāqān were murdered by eight Turkish soldiers. Ya'qūbī records their names.<sup>(1)</sup>

Ṭabarī gives a detailed account of the murder, and the following facts may be noticed. In the first place, according to the first report of Abī Ja'far,<sup>(2)</sup> an order was given by Mutawakkil to confiscate the lands of Ittakh in Isfahān and al-Jabal and to give them to Faṭḥ ibn Khāqān. These orders had already been completed, and they were ready for the signature of Mutawakkil on 5th Shawal, year (247 A.H./861 A.D.). Ṭabarī also points out that the news of confiscation reached Waṣif.

In the second place Mutawakkil intended to pray with the people on the last Friday of Ramaḍān, and the news circulated among

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1. See Ta'rikh, II, p.178.

2. For details see Ṭabarī, III, pp.1452-1456; and also see Kāmil, VII, pp.60f.

people; so that large numbers of them came to Sāmarrā from different provinces. When Mutawakkil wanted to go for prayer, both of ‘Ubaid allah ibn Yaḥya and Faṭḥ ibn Khāqān informed him that a mass of people had arrived at Sāmarrā, including some of the Banī Hashim<sup>(1)</sup> and they might disturb him by complaints or requests for many things, and they suggested that it would be better to send in his place one of his sons. He agreed to this and ordered his son Muntaṣir to go to the prayer, but they advised him that it would be better to nominate his son Mu‘tazz which would serve to elevate both Mu‘tazz and the Arabs of Banī Hashim,<sup>(2)</sup> at the same time he agreed to this and ordered his son Mu‘tazz to pray instead of him. Ṭabarī adds, that Muntaṣir remained in his house, and no doubt his anger against his father was increased by this event, and strengthened his determination to murder him.

Ṭabarī gives another report<sup>(3)</sup> declaring that Mutawakkil determined to assassinate his son - Muntaṣir - and some of the Turkish leaders like Waṣif, Bugha, on Tuesday night 3 Shawal of year 247. Mutawakkil's derision and mockery was increased in the presence of his ministers and drinking companions on one occasion for instance, once he scolded his son and he wanted his drink to an exaggerated degree. Ṭabarī adds that Mutawakkil said

1. Banī Hashim, the prophet Muḥammad's family.

2. III, pp.1456-1458; and see also Kāmil, VII, pp.62f.

3. III, pp.1456-1458; and see also Kāmil, VII, pp.62f.

to his drinking companions: "you all may be a witness that I have deprived the one who hurries. I have called you al-Muntaṣir [The victorious] but because of your foolishness people called you al-Muntaẓir [The one who waits] and today you became as one who hurries." Muntaṣir said to his father: "O, Commander of faithful, if you order me to be beheaded, it will be easier than what you do with me." Ṭabarī adds that Muntaṣir left his father's seat and made contact with Zurafa and they went together to Zurafa's room.

It seems that the order to murder was given by Muntaṣir immediately after leaving the seat beside his father, though the historians do not state this clearly. One may conclude from what is recorded of the conversation between Muntaṣir and Zurafa which indicates what had happened soon after. It seems also that Muntaṣir did not depart, but he stayed in his father's palace, as if he was waiting for the announcement of Mutawakkil's murder. Then Bugha the Turk - who directed the act of murder - soon after the uproar began which indicated execution of the plot met Muntaṣir just as Ṭabarī<sup>(1)</sup> describes how Mutawakkil was killed so he relates from 'Ath'ath<sup>(2)</sup> that the order to bring food was given by Mutawakkil when Muntaṣir and Zurafa had left their seats. Bugha, who was the Calif's usher, and who was in charge of the palace that night, went to the seat of Caliph and ordered his

1. III, pp.1459f; Kāmil, VII, pp.62-64.

2. 'Ath'ath was one of Mutawakkil's boon companions who attended his seat, he was attending that night when Mutawakkil was killed, so he is one of the witnesses who saw the evidence of killing.



boon companions to go to their rooms. Fatḥ ibn Khāqān said to him, "this is not the time to leave, and the commander of faithful ordered me that if he had more than seven drinks, no one should be allowed to approach his seat and he has now already had fourteen to drink." Then Bugha said to the drinking companions: "the Commander of the faithful's wife is behind the curtain, and he is drunk, so get up and leave." All the boon companions went out except al-Fatḥ, 'Āth'āth and four special servants and also Abu Aḥmad, Mutawakkil's son was in the seat, all the doors were closed by Bugha ash-Sharabī except the river door, where the men appointed to murder the Caliph were waiting. Abū Aḥmad, son of Mutawakkil cried out "O, riffraffs, what is this" according to Ṭabarī they comprised Baghlum al-Turki, Baghir, Mūsā ibn Bugha, Hārūn bin Suwartakin and Bugha ash-Sharabi.

Ṭabarī continues "when Mutawakkil heard the shouting of his son Abū Aḥmad, he raised his head and said: "O, Bugha what is this?" Bugha answered, "They are the guards who stay overnight at the door of my master, the Commander of the faithful." The men turned back when Mutawakkil asked Bugha that question. Ṭabarī continues that 'Āth'āth relates: "then I heard Bugha saying to them 'O riffraffs, certainly you are going to die so you must die as honourable men.'" Then the men came again to the seat, and Mutawakkil's shoulder was torn by a blow from Baghlum. The Caliph tried to attack him, but then both Baghir and Baghlum together beat the Caliph, al-Fatḥ the minister said "Woe unto you, Commander of the faithful!" Then he threw himself over



the Caliph to protect him. But Hārūn pierced him with his sword, after which both Hārūn and Mūsā ibn Bugha killed him with the Caliph. The drinking companions had run away.

The historians do not agree as to the date of his death; according to Ṭabarī and ibn Athīr it is not clear whether the murder took place on the night of 4th or on the night of 5th Shawal. (1)

In the morning, the news of the Caliph's murder spread in Maḥzuza, the city which Mutawakkil built, so the soldiers angrily crowded in the Ja'fari. It appears that some of Maghribs soldiers were sent by Muntaṣir with orders to attack the crowd, and it dispersed after a short time. (2)

On the following morning of Mutawakkil's murder, a great number of leaders and notables, including Shakiriyya, and the soldiers went to al-Ja'fariya. A dispatch from Muntaṣir was read by Aḥmed ibn al-Khaṣib, declaring that Faṭḥ ibn Khāqān had killed his father, so he killed him in revenge, after which the people proclaimed the new Caliph. (3)

Muntaṣir was the elder son of Mutawakkil, his mother being a Byzantine woman called Ḥabashiya. He was twenty-five years old, when proclaimed Caliph.

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1. Ṭabarī, III, p.1465; Kāmil, VII, p.34; Mas'ūdī mentions in his Murūj, VII, p.267 to the days 3rd and 4th of Shawal.
  2. Ibid., p.1479; Ibid., p.68.
  3. Ibid., p.1471; Ibid., p.66.

The proclamation was completed in his father's palace al-Ja'farī.<sup>(1)</sup> It appears that Muntaṣir hated to live in the city which was built by his father, and the historian records that he moved to Sāmarrā after ten days, with his family, leaders and soldiers.<sup>(2)</sup>

I mentioned before that Mutawakkil appointed his three sons, Muntaṣir, Mu'tazz and Mu'ayyad as successors to the throne, but when Muntaṣir became Caliph he obliged both of his brothers to withdraw from their post after forty days of his succession.

Ṭabarī and ibn Athīr clearly record<sup>(3)</sup> that some of the Turkish leaders, including Aḥmed ibn al-Khaṣīb, Wasif, and Bugha - who had been responsible for Mutawakkil's murder - were afraid Mu'tazz might become Caliph after his brother and that he would take revenge on them for the murder of his father, so they insisted that Muntaṣir should remove them from the throne and this was at last agreed.<sup>(4)</sup>

The period of Muntaṣir's rule did not last for long for he died soon after he had reigned for six months. Many reasons for his death are given by the historians. According to Ṭabarī and

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1. Murūj, VII, p.290; Ṭabarī reports, III, pp.1475-1478, the text of the proclamation which was taken to Muntaṣir.
  2. Ṭabarī, III, p.1471; Murūj, VII, p.291.
  3. Ṭabarī, III, pp.1485f; Kāmil, VII, p.72.
  4. Ṭabarī reports the texts of the deposition commandments which were written by Mu'tazz and Mu'ayyad, III, pp.1489-1492. See also Murūj, VII, p.305.

ibn Athīr,<sup>(1)</sup> he was suffering either from diphtheria in his mouth or from a swelling in his stomach, and they also record that his doctor ibn Ṭayfūr might have poisoned him.<sup>(2)</sup>

Mawali (clients) arranged a meeting in al-Harūnī palace immediately after Muntaṣir had died. It included Bugha [the younger], Bugha The Elder, and Utamish, and after it an agreement was made between the Turkish leaders, Maghribs and Ashrusnāh that they would accept as Caliph the person who was acceptable to Bugha the younger, Bugha the Elder, and Utamish.

It is clear that the objective of this condition was not to proclaim any of Mutawakkil's sons and so to prevent them revenging their father. It was agreed by all that Aḥmad ibn al-Mu'taṣim should be nominated; he was called Musta'in and was proclaimed on 6th Rabi' al-Akhir on 248 A.H./862 A.D.<sup>(3)</sup>

In the first year of his rule (248 A.H.) Ṭahīr ibn 'Abdallah

1. Ṭabarī, III, p.1495f; Kāmil, VII, p.74.
2. Mas'ūdī, however, in Murūj, VII, p.300 records that the cause of Muntaṣir's death was pneumonia cold, he also records another report that ibn Ṭayfūrī, his doctor, had poisoned him with scalpel when he bled him. The factor of that poison was as Mas'ūdī records, Muntaṣir showed that he was determined to disperse the Turkish army and to paralyze their power.
3. Ṭabarī, III, pp.1501f; Kāmil, VII, p.76. But Mas'ūdī in Murūj, VII, p.323, records that his proclamation was on Sunday 5th Rabi' al-akhir 248 A.H.

ibn Ṭahīr, the Governor of Khurasan died in Khurasan. Musta'in appointed Ṭahīr's son Muḥammad bin 'Abdallāh as governor of Iraq. The ceremony of Ṭahīr's appointment took place in the palace of Jawsaq on Saturday 12th of Sha'bān.<sup>(1)</sup>

In the year (251 A.H./865 A.D.) Baghir the Turk was murdered by two Turkish leaders, Waṣif and Bugha, the younger, with the cognizance of Musta'in. The historians record that Baghir got an assurance from his troops that Waṣif, Bugha the younger, and the Caliph should be killed. When the news of the murder of Baghir reached the Turks at Harūnī, Karkh and Dūr, they blockaded the palace of Jawsaq, where the Caliph lived. Afterwards the Caliph accompanied by Bugha and Waṣif went by boat to Baghdād,<sup>(2)</sup> where they arrived either on 14th or 15th of Muḥarram, Musta'in resided in the house of the governor of Baghdād Muḥammad ibn 'abdallāh ibn Ṭahīr.<sup>(3)</sup>

It appears, that the Turkish leaders regretted what they had done. They were determined to correct their fault, so some of their leaders came to Baghdād to apologize to the Caliph and they asked him for forgiveness and to go back with them to Sāmarrā. Historical evidence declares that the Caliph forgave them, but he refused to accompany them to Sāmarrā preferring to stay in Baghdād. On their arriving at Sāmarrā they consulted with other Turkish

1. Ṭabarī, III, pp.1505f.

2. Ṭabarī, III, pp.1535-1539; Murūj, VII, pp.324f; Kāmil, VII, pp.89-91.

3. Ibid., p.1542; Ibid., p.325.

groups, and they made a joint decision to release Mu'tazz from his prison,<sup>(1)</sup> so they took him out and he was proclaimed Caliph on Wednesday 11th Muḥarram 251 A.H.<sup>(2)</sup>

Thus the Muslims had at that time, two Caliphs, Musta'in in Baghdād and Mu'tazz in Sāmarrā. Relations between them became worse, and naturally aggravated the relationship between the two Iraqi cities, Sāmarrā and Baghdād.

It was obvious that if military action was taken, then it would be by Sāmarrā, partly because she possessed the greater number of Turkish troops, and partly because her treasury was full.

Realising this Musta'in ordered Muḥammad ibn 'Abdallah the governor of Baghdād to fortify the city. Both the western and eastern sides of Baghdād were surrounded by enclosures, the defence was arranged, leaders were appointed for each gate of the city, and ditches were dug all around the enclosures.<sup>(3)</sup>

An army led by 'Ali Aḥmad, brother of the Caliph was sent to Baghdād. When these troops arrived 'Akbarra,<sup>(4)</sup> the Turkish troops who were in Baghdād Governor's army escaped and joined the other army.

Armed clashes took place between the two armies.<sup>(5)</sup> It

1. Both of Mu'tazz and his brother Mu'ayyad were arrested by Musta'in in a small chamber at al-Jawsaq, as Ṭabarī, III, p.1545 and Mas'ūdī in Murūj, VII, pp.364f. recorded.
2. Ṭabarī, III, pp.1543-1545; Murūj, VII, pp.364f.
3. Ṭabarī, III, pp.1505-1551; Kāmil, VII, p.94.
4. 'Akbarra, as Yāqūt records in Mu'jam, III, p.705, it is a name of a small town of the suburb of Dujail, the distance between it and Baghdād was 10 Farsakh.
5. For details see Ṭabarī, III, pp.1542-1596; Murūj, VII, pp.365f; Kāmil, VII, pp.95-101.

seems that Baghdād was exhausted by the besieging army where its Governor, Muḥammad ibn 'Abdallah ibn Ṭahir was obliged to write to Mu'tazzat Sāmarrā telling him that he was ready to depose Musta'in in order to settle the peace. The laity of Baghdād after this rose against the governor called for the support and of help Musta'in, but without any result. Soon the Governor of Baghdād met with Abī Aḥmad<sup>(1)</sup> at Shammāsīyah. They agreed to depose Musta'in, on condition of guaranteeing safe conduct for him, his family and his sons. He was to dwell firstly at Wasīṭ and then to leave for Mecca.<sup>(2)</sup> However, when Musta'in felt that his position had become weak and that he stood alone, after abandoning the Governor of Baghdād he abdicated.<sup>(3)</sup>

#### C - THE GREAT MOSQUE OF SĀMARRĀ

It is the second main mosque of Sāmarrā. That the first one was built by al-Mu'taṣim right at the beginning of the foundation in the year (221 A.H./836 A.D.) is recorded by Ya'qūbī who states that Mu'taṣim had plots of ground marked out for the military and civil officers and for the people, and likewise for the Great Mosque.<sup>(4)</sup> It was used for the Friday prayers till Mutawakkil's accession in the year (232 A.H./847 A.D.). It was situated at the

- 
1. The Caliph's brother who was the leader of the besieging army.
  2. For details see Ṭabarī, III, pp.1542-1641; Murūj, VI, pp.366-370.
  3. Ṭabarī, III, p.1641.
  4. Buldān, p.32.



northern end of the main bazaar, presumably west of the Great Mosque and not far from the Jawsaq al-Khāqānī.<sup>(1)</sup>

In the beginning of Mutawakkil's reign this older mosque became too small for the number of believers and the troops. Hence Mutawakkil constructed a new main mosque "at the beginning of al-Ḥair in a broad space beyond the houses and not in contact with the allotments. He made it good and spacious and strong" as Ya'qūbī records.<sup>(2)</sup>

Ross described this mosque in 1834 as a magnificent brick building in the form of a rectangle 264 by 159 paces long, with a bastion at each corner, between which there were, on the longer sides, eleven turrets<sup>(3)</sup> and on the shorter, eight. The inner cloisters and an outside range of buildings have been entirely destroyed, and the bricks carried away. The remaining building, with the exception of the arches over the doorways, which have fallen in, is in a wonderful state of preservation.<sup>(4)</sup>

Later Jones who visited the mosque in 1846 says that both the Malwiyah and the "Medreseh"<sup>(5)</sup> were built of fine bricks and

1. Herzfeld, Arch#ologische Reise, I, p.87.

2. Buldān, p.35.

3. The references do not agree about the number of the towers on the longer sides of this mosque. Creswell mentions in E.M.A., II, p.255 that they are ten, but he mentions the number 12 in his S.A.E.M.A., p.274; the Department of Antiquities mentions the number ten.

4. J.R.G.S., XI, p.128.

5. He calls it once as a Medreseh [school] and once as Jami' [mosque]. Obviously he was confused and not certain of its identity. I think the reason was that he thought the great niche (the Mihrab) is as the main entrance.



with the greatest neatness. The Medreseh was about 810 feet in length and 490 broad, having 12 buttresses between the corner bastions on its N.W. and S.E. faces, and 10 on its N.E. and S.W. sides. The great entrance faced the Keblah and showed at once its Mohammedan origin. A fountain appears to have existed in the centre of its court. Its walls are at present about 30 feet high, and on its S.W. side the remains of arched windows are discernible. (1)

This mosque is several hundred metres to the north of the modern Sāmarrā, it is completely abandoned, has lost all its pillars and comprises no more actually than the minaret and a rectangular enclosure in brick in quite good preservation. (2)

#### The outer wall:

The mosque of Sāmarrā consists of a rectangular enclosure with bastioned walls, measuring about 240 x 156 m. internally (proportion approximately as 3:2) (3) (784 by 512 feet). (4) Its

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1. J.R.G.S., XI (1848), pp.8f.
  2. D.A.I., Sāmarrā, p.45; Beylie et Sāmarrā, p.115.
  3. The measurement above mentioned given by Creswell, E.M.A., II, p.254, and in his S.A.E.M.A., p.274. However some sources present another measurement slightly different. Bell, Amurath to Amurath, p.233 mentions the figures as 240 x 157.60 m. The Department of Antiquities, Sāmarrā, p.45, mentions 160 x 240 m. Fikrī in M.Q.M., p.237 mentions 240 x 156 m. But Herzfeld in Sāmarrā, p.19, gives the figures quite different than the others. He mentions 260 m. long 180 m. broad.
  4. S.A.E.M.A., p.274; Ross in J.R.G.S., XI, p.128 gives the measurement in paces as 264 x 159. But Jones in J.R.G.S., XI, 1948, p.8, mentions 810 x 490 feet.

area, therefore, is nearly 38,000 square m., it is consequently the largest mosque in the world.<sup>(1)</sup>

The enclosure wall is built of baked brick (Fig. 22), and round bastions are built at intervals along the walls and at the corners.

The greatest length is from north to south, and the four angle towers are larger in diameter than those which are set along the walls. The intermediate bastions are perfectly regular in size and shape, except the two on either side of the southern gate, from which a segment is cut off by door openings, and the bastion immediately to the west of the same gate which has a small addition to the western part of its curve.<sup>(2)</sup>

The bastions are nearly semicircular in plan, averaging 3.60 m. in diameter with a projection of 2.15 m. and the curtain walls between them average 15 m. in length. There are four corner towers, twelve intermediate to east and west, and eight to north and south, making forty-four in all [Fig.23].

Most of the plans presented by the archaeologists agree concerning the number of towers on the longer sides of the great mosque, twelve and eight in the other sides. This fact is shown clearly from Beylie's [Fig. 24], Herzfeld's [Fig. 25], Viollet's [Fig. 26] and Creswell's [Fig. 23] plans.

Creswell records that the corner towers project 2.15 m. like the rest, but they do so on both faces, so their diameter is

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1. E.M.A., II, p.254.

2. Bell, op.cit., p.233.

inevitably greater (about 5.15 m.). These towers stood on rectangular bases of two or three courses of brick, a number of which have recently been laid bare, especially on the north side.<sup>(1)</sup>

The main axis of this mosque points  $12^{\circ}$ W of S.,<sup>(2)</sup> whereas the true qibla is  $13^{\circ}30'$ W. of S., so the error is only  $1^{\circ}30'$ . Only its enclosing walls have been preserved; the roof and the supports on which it rested have all disappeared. Apparently it was already in this state when Ross saw it in 1834.<sup>(3)</sup> These walls, as Creswell states, which are 2.65 m. thick, are of light red bricks 25-27 Cm. square and 7 Cm. thick.<sup>(4)</sup> The face of the brickwork has been eaten away higher than a man can reach. Gertrude Bell suggests that the cause was by the constant scrub and wear of the heavier sorts of desert dust,<sup>(5)</sup> but Creswell mentions that caused by a combination of salt and moisture<sup>(6)</sup>, or licked away by animals in search of salt as Professor Rice told me.

The towers are perfectly plain, but each curtain wall is decorated with a frieze of six recessed squares with bevelled edges,<sup>(7)</sup> [Fig. 27] except the first from the south on each side,

1. E.M.A., II, p.255.

2. Herzfeld, Sāmarrā, p.19.

3. J.R.G.S., XI, p.128.

4. E.M.A., II, p.254.

5. Op.cit., p.211.

6. E.M.A., II, p.254.

7. E.M.A., II, p.256; D.A.I., Sāmarrā, p.46.

where there are five only. In each square is a shallow saucer, about a metre in diameter and 25 cm. deep, still covered, in a few cases, with a coating of stucco [Fig. 28] (this shows that the brickwork of the walls was not bare originally). Only the upper half of these bulls-eyes is constructed as a semi-circular arch, instead of the whole circle as one would expect.<sup>(1)</sup>

In most of the curtain walls there is a vertical groove (in two curtain walls on the north side there are two) which doubtless contained a gutter pipe from the flat roof.<sup>(2)</sup>

The total height of the walls is now about 10.50 m.<sup>(3)</sup> It cannot have been much more originally. In spite of its simplicity the whole effect is truly monumental.<sup>(4)</sup>

#### The Doorways:

There were sixteen rectangular doorways spanned by beams with a relieving arch above.<sup>(5)</sup> On the southern wall none of the curtain walls is pierced except the central one, where there appear to be three entrances.<sup>(6)</sup> What appeared to be the main gate of the mosque in the middle of the south wall, before Herzfeld's

1. E.M.A., II, p.256.

2. Ibid., P.256; D.A.I., Sāmarrā, p.46.

3. Department of Antiquities in Sāmarrā, p.45 gives the total height of the walls as about 10 m.

4. E.M.A., II, p.256.

5. E.I./2, art. "Architecture", p.620.

6. E.M.A., II, p.255.

excavation turned out<sup>(1)</sup> on examination to be not a doorway but a mihrab.

On the north side there is an opening in each curtain wall [Fig. 27] making five in all, but only three of them are actually doorways, for the small ones at each end are merely holes that have been made in the wall; the latter average 1.50 m. in width and the doorways proper just under 4 m. On the west there are nine openings in the curtain walls<sup>(2)</sup> but the first and last of these are merely holes in the wall, likewise the opening in the seventh curtain wall, which is merely a gap that has been broken through.<sup>(3)</sup>

Creswell points out that the width of the doorways proper vary considerably as follows: 3.90, 4.70, 3.91, 3.85, 2.60 and 3.85 m. On the opposite side [Fig. 23], the doors correspond to the above, except one in the seventh curtain wall which is omitted, so that there are five doors only. These lateral doorways in most cases are situated approximately in the middle of the respective curtain wall, their positions do not appear to have been chosen so as to come on the axis of the corresponding aisle of the sanctuary and riwaqs (porticos).<sup>(4)</sup>

1. Ibid., p.255.

2. Both Viollet's and Creswell's plans [Figs. 23 and 26] show that the whole opening are nine. But Beylie's plan [Fig. 24] shows only six doorways, while Herzfeld's one [Fig. 25] shows seven openings.

3. E.M.A., II, p.255.

4. Ibid., p.255.

In every case, except in the centre of the north side, the masonry above the doors has fallen, but it would appear, from an examination of the best-preserved jambs, that there was a very shallow relieving arch, strengthened with beams. Creswell gives an example of this. The southern large doorway on the west side on the right of the brickwork slopes backwards as if to take the springing of a shallow arch, and beam holes can be seen at the same level and slightly above it.<sup>(1)</sup>

### The Structure

The mosque consisted of four parts surrounding the Sahn, the haram at the south end, and three others around the three remaining sides at a lower level [Fig. 23].

It was not possible to reconstruct the plan with certainty until Herzfeld's excavations in 1910, except as regards the number of aisles of the sanctuary,<sup>(2)</sup> for the supports of the roofs had long since been removed for the sake of their material.

The haram has twenty-four rows of columns, forming twenty-five aisles,<sup>(3)</sup> averaging about 4.20 m. in clear width, corresponding to the axes of the windows,<sup>(4)</sup> for each aisle has

1. Ibid., p.255.

2. Ibid., p.256.

3. Herzfeld, Erster., p.6; Bell, op.cit., p.233; Creswell, E.M.A., II, p.256 and his S.A.E.M.A., p.276; D.A.I. Samarra, p.47; Rice, Islamic Art, p.34.

4. E.M.A., II, p.256.

a window in the south wall [Fig. 29].<sup>(1)</sup>

The Windows: The qibla wall has 24 windows<sup>(2)</sup> on the upper part, below the level of the frieze, evenly disposed under the flat roof [Fig. 29]. Herzfeld points out that two of them were situated over the doors flanking the mihrab.<sup>(3)</sup>

Herzfeld was surprised that the row of windows did not seem to have any relationship to the disposition of the towers; they are all situated on the axes of the ḥaram's north-southern aisles.<sup>(4)</sup>

There were also two more windows on each side in the second curtain wall from the south, making twenty-eight in all.<sup>(5)</sup> There were no other windows for the architect doubtless considered that the riwaqs (aisles) did not need them as they are so much shallower than the ḥaram (sanctuary).<sup>(6)</sup> As the mihrab reaches up to the roof there is no window above it in the middle aisle.

Externally these windows are narrow rectangular openings, but on their inner face they are wider, [Fig.30 a,b] being covered

1. Herzfeld, Erster, p.6.

2. Herzfeld, Archäologische Reise, I, p.94, but he mentions in his Erster, p.6, that the windows in the qibla wall were 25; see Creswell, E.M.A., II, p.256.

3. Herzfeld, Archäologische Reise, I, p.94; E.M.A., II, p.256.

4. Ibid., p.94.

5. Beylie points out in Prome et Sāmarrā, pp.117f, that these two windows were without ornament on the east or west face of the enclosure near to the junction of the south face.

6. E.M.A., II, p.256.



by a scalloped or lobed arch of five lobes springing from little engaged columns, the whole being set in a sunk rectangular frame. (1)

Two kinds of glass were found in the mosque during the excavations carried out by Herzfeld in 1911; the first kind, as Herzfeld points out, consisted of the remains of slabs of glass 2-5 cm. thick, which he suggests served for these windows, the sheets being fixed between frames also of glass. (2) The other kind of glass was represented by small pieces which have the shape of a triangle formed of three circular segments; they are flat and about 3-9 mm. thick, and were intended to occupy the edges. (3)

The Interior: As I have mentioned this mosque consisted of four parts surrounding the sahn (The courtyard), the Harim (sanctuary) situated at the south end, has twenty-four rows of columns forming twenty-five aisles, (4) averaging about 4.20 m. in width corresponding to the axes of the windows. (5)

The central aisle which terminated at the mihrab and was not provided with a window, was slightly wider than the rest

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1. Ibid., p.256; cf. Herzfeld, Archäologische Reise, I, p.95.

2. Herzfeld, Erster, p.6.

3. Herzfeld, Archäologische Reise, I, p.95.

4. Herzfeld, Erster, p.6; Bell, op.cit., p.233; E.M.A., II, p.256 and S.A.E.M.A., p.276; D.A.I., Samarra, p.47; E.I./2, art. "Architecture", p.620; Rice, Islamic Art, p.34.

5. E.M.A., II, p.256.

(about 5m);<sup>(1)</sup> similarly the middle aisle in the sanctuary of Abū Dulaf is wider than the others.<sup>(2)</sup>

There is a lack of unanimity in the plans that have been made of the mosque concerning the number of colonnades in the interior.<sup>(3)</sup> A close comparison of the plans presented by de Beylie,<sup>(4)</sup> Herzfeld,<sup>(5)</sup> Viollet,<sup>(6)</sup> and Creswell<sup>(7)</sup> shows this.

Viollet, Bell, and the Department of Antiquities in Iraq made out the colonnades to be 10 deep upon the south side and three deep upon the north.<sup>(8)</sup> But both Herzfeld and Creswell's plans show only 9 colonnades.<sup>(9)</sup>

The northern part, as Herzfeld points out, matches the Haram exactly, and was also divided into twenty-five aisles by twenty-four rows of pillars, but there are only three supports each, running perpendicular to the north wall, and here again the central aisle was wider than the rest.<sup>(10)</sup>

1. Herzfeld, Archäologische Reise, I, p.87 and his Erster., p.6; Cf. Bell, op.cit., p.233; E.M.A., II, p.256.

2. E.M.A., II, p.279.

3. Bell, op.cit., p.234.

4. See Fig. 24.

5. See Fig. 25.

6. See Fig. 26.

7. See Fig. 23.

8. See Fig. 26; Bell, op.cit., p.235; D.A.I. Sāmarrā, p.47.

9. See Figs. 25, 23.

10. Erster, p.6; Cf. E.M.A., II, p.256.

Viollet and the Department of Antiquities made out the colonnades in the north side to be 4.<sup>(1)</sup> In my opinion Herzfeld and Creswell are correct in thinking that the north part had 3 supports.

The other two parts are the side riwāqs, where the aisles run west-east (i.e. perpendicular to the qibla wall) and consisted of twenty-three aisles formed by twenty-two rows<sup>(2)</sup> so the total number of all supports was 464.<sup>(3)</sup>

The space between the colonnades was undoubtedly roofed with beams; the holes into which the large cross-beams were fitted could still be seen in 1911 on the inner side of the wall.<sup>(4)</sup>

It is suggested by Herzfeld and other archaeologists that these supports carried the flat ceiling directly.<sup>(5)</sup> This view was followed by Miss Bell<sup>(6)</sup> and Creswell.<sup>(7)</sup>

The removal of the debris from the inside of the mosque during the recent excavation carried out by the Department of Antiquities has brought to light the existence of buttresses of

1. See Viollet's plan [Fig. 26]; D.A.I., Sāmarrā, p.47.
2. Herzfeld, Erster., p.6; E.M.A., II, p.256; S.A.E.M.A., p.276, but they are according to Viollet's plan [Fig. 26] 16 rows forming 17 aisles with 5 deep to east and west.
3. Haram:  $9 \times 24 = 216$ , North Part:  $3 \times 24 = 72$ , East Part:  $22 \times 4 = 88$ , West Part = 88, total = 464.
4. Bell, op.cit., p.233.
5. Erster., p.8
6. Op.cit., p.235.
7. E.M.A., II, p.256 and S.A.E.M.A., p.276.

brick and mortar, and experts in the Department think that these buttresses possibly formed the nucleus of a system of "Arches supported on pillars".

I have seen and examined this buttress with Professor John Shaply<sup>(1)</sup> and Dr. 'Aziz Hameed.<sup>(2)</sup> The latter told me that the Department had not yet finished examining this buttress, but it seemed possible that it might have supported an arch. If so the roof would not have been supported directly by the pillars.

The Supports: I have already mentioned that the foundation parapets of the supporting rows have been plundered by brick robbers, presumably already in early times, for on top of the debris of the robbed bricks there are other strata of early date. A careful investigation showed the negative imprint in the debris of the old plaster of the base.<sup>(3)</sup>

The bases were square, the length of each side being 2.07m. composite column-piers stood on them consisting of an octagonal brick core with a marble column at each of the four corners. Herzfeld points out that some of the collapsed column cores were found in the rubble, and it was in this way that it was possible to measure the octagonal angle. Some of the marble columns were

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1. He was Professor of Islamic Art in the University of Baghdad.
2. He is the director of the Islamic researches in the Directorate General of Antiquities.
3. Herzfeld, Erster, p.7; E.M.A., II, p.257.

round and some octagonal with a diameter of about 30 cm.<sup>(1)</sup>  
 [Fig. 31 a,b], the length of the cylinder amounted to over 2m.

The cylinders were given metal pegs, the grooves filled up with lead and (the junction) surrounded with a metal ring,<sup>(2)</sup> the teak-wood pillars in the Great Mosque of Manṣūr in Baghdād followed the same system.<sup>(3)</sup>

Herzfeld points out that one pier shows a Greek stonemason's symbol A; proof of the correctness of the statements that the stone masons and material for these pillars came from Latakia and Antioch.<sup>(4)</sup> This goes with Ya'qūbī's statement according to which Mu'taṣim "wrote for workmen, masons and artificers, such as smiths, carpenters and all other craftsmen to be sent, and for teak and other kinds of wood, and for palm-trunks to be brought from Baṣrah and from the adjoining regions, namely Baghdād and the rest of the Sawād, and from Antioch and other towns on the Syrian Coast. Marble workers and men experienced in marble paving were also brought, and workshops for working marble were established in Latakia and elsewhere."<sup>(5)</sup>

1. Ibid., p.7; Ibid., p.257.

2. Ibid., p.7; Ibid., p.257.

3. Khaṭīb, I, p.107 described the columns in the Great Mosque of Manṣūr in Baghdad as follows: "Most of them were constructed of two or more beams of baulks of timber, joined together endwise with glue, and clamped with iron bolts". Cf. Le Strange, Baghdād during the Abbāsid Caliphate, p.34; Herzfeld, Erster, pp.7f; E.M.A., II, pp.31f; Herzfeld, Archäologische Reise, I, p.135; al-Amid, op.cit., pp.270f.

4. Erster, p.8.

5. Buldān, p.32.

The marble columns had bell-shaped capitals and bases over 50 cm. in length. The clear height of the interior from the pavement to the holes made for the beams of the ceiling amounts to 10.35 m. This would allow for a capital and base each a double cubit about (1.035 m) high and a corner-shaft of three pieces, plus a capital and base of 50 cm. The columns were of coloured material, nine different kinds being found, mostly marble; granite was rarely used. The brick cores were plastered over and colours corresponding to the marble corner-shafts were painted upon it.<sup>(1)</sup>

Herzfeld points out that the interior finishing of this mosque must have consisted of wood or stone. The excavation certainly indicates that there were wooden pillars. After the collapse of the roofs the wooden pillars would still have stood in the debris for some time, until they were taken away for building purposes or destroyed by the effects of the climate. Wooden pillars would not leave any trace except the pits in which they stood, and they have always constituted important building material all over Iraq; they are still today characteristic features of the architecture of Baghdād, Ḥillah, 'Amarāh, Baṣrah, and indeed of all the towns of the country. Another factor in favour of wooden pillars is the fact that the height of about 10 m. which was required is quite normal for wooden pillars. For these pillars the trunks of palm-trees are

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1. Herzfeld, Erster, p.8; E.M.A., II, p.257f.

used in Iraq. Besides this, teak, one of the strangest and most precious kinds of timber had been imported from Zanzibar and India since early time. Ya'qūbī stresses this clearly in his report mentioned above.<sup>(1)</sup> That means, the trees of amanus were used, as they were even at the time of the Babylonians and Assyrians. The pillars of the Great Mosques of Manṣūr in Baghdād were also made of teak.<sup>(2)</sup>

Herzfeld's excavations have brought to light in all the ruins small fragments of a fine cristallic marble of bluish-white colour,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  cm. thick with a polished surface and a rough plain base. Besides these fragments, Herzfeld also found in the mosque many pieces of the same marble of which the smallest dimension was just over  $2\frac{1}{2}$  cm. which shows that they could not be fragments of floor tiles.<sup>(3)</sup> Herzfeld suggested that they should perhaps be identified as fragments of pillars.<sup>(4)</sup>

It would be incorrect to think that stone and marble was not available for the architecture of Baghdād and Sāmarrā. At the time of the Califs the construction of primitive shops where only locally available material was used had ceased. Reference

1. Buldān, p.32.

2. Khaṭīb, I, p.107. He describes the using of timber in the Great Mosque of al-Manṣūr in the Round City of Baghdād he says: "Most of them (columns) were constructed of two or more beams or baulks of timber, joined together endwise with glue, and clamped with iron bolts."; cf. Le Strange, Baghdād during the 'Abbāsid Caliphate, p.34; Herzfeld, Archäologische Reise, I, p.135; and his Erster, pp.7f; E.M.A., II, pp.31f; al-Amid, op.cit., pp.271f.

3. Archäologische Reise, I, p.92.

4. Ibid., p.92.



should be made to the bridge of Banī Zuraiq in old Baghdād which was entirely built of marble, to the Palace Khān al-Khail which had marble pillars, to the palace of Mu'taḍid the roof of which was supported on 10 marble pillars, to the magnificent marble-miḥrab of al-Khāṣakī mosque in Baghdād, and finally to the basalt pillars of Qantarāt ar-Raṣāṣ at Sāmarrā. (1)

In reference to Ya'qūbī's statement mentioned above, it would seem that the material and the workers came from northern Syria. The pillars were apparently already cut in the workshops there, and finishing touches were put on them after they were erected.

With regard to the interior decoration of the mosque al-Maḡdisī reports that the walls were lined with enamel (Mīnā), (2) but Herzfeld points out that it is hard to believe that all the (8500) qm. of the interior walls were so decorated. (3) However I am inclined to believe al-Maḡdisī's statement for two reasons, firstly because he mentions only the four walls, the measurements of which total  $312 \text{ m.} + 480 \text{ m.} = 792 \text{ m.}$ , namely  $156 + 156 \text{ m.} = 312 \text{ m.}$  for the northern and southern walls.  $240 + 240 \text{ m.} = 480 \text{ m.}$ , for the western and eastern walls, and these figures represent the total length, including the openings forming the doorways. Secondly, the excavations and the reconstruction works

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1. Ibid., p.92.

2. Op.cit., p.122.

3. Archäologische Reise, I, p.95.

carried out by the Iraqi Department of Antiquities in 1963-1964 under the supervision of Dr. 'Aziz Hameed, disclosed a piece of blue glass still in site on the lower part of the southern end of the western wall, it had previously been hidden under the debris. I have seen this piece of blue glass. Further a layer of hard gypsum is to be seen all along the lower parts of the interior walls. I was able to examine this layer carefully. It was one metre in height and projected slightly so that it formed a kind of frieze [Fig. 32]. The surface of this layer was such that tiles or slabs of glass could well have been attached to it. My conclusion is that the lower parts of the interior walls were coated with blue glass to a height of one metre; while only the Haram's wall was probably coated with a band of enamel.

Herzfeld points out with reference to Maqdisī's report that he probably meant that there were glass-mosaics, suggesting that the Great Mosque at Sāmarrā was trying to compete with mosque of Damascus, which was famous for its mosaics.<sup>(1)</sup>

Herzfeld also found some small pieces of marble in the shape of a triangle formed of three circular segments; they are flat and about 3-9 mm. thick. Their shape indicates that they were used for filling in at the edges. They indicate a pattern of overlapping circles, like simple rosettes. At first Herzfeld thought that these pieces could have been embedded into the plaster of the walls as in "opus sectile";<sup>(2)</sup> though later he came to believe that they were fragments of the window, a belief

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1. Archäologische Reise, I, p.95.

2. Ibid., I, p.95.

supported by their ordinary greenish colour, that of lead glass.<sup>(1)</sup>

The Mihrāb "The Prayer Niche":

On the southern wall, just in the middle, there was a triple opening [Fig. 33], the middle one larger than the others. Some scholars have suggested that there was no prayer niche (Mihrāb) in the south wall,<sup>(2)</sup> but Herzfeld's excavations showed that what had previously been taken for a door in the centre of the south wall was really a Mihrāb.<sup>(3)</sup> [Fig. 34]

The Mihrāb consists of an inner rectangular niche, (2.59 m. wide 1.75 m. high)<sup>(4)</sup> flanked by two pairs of standing marble columns set back from the wall in a rectangle.<sup>(5)</sup>

Herzfeld points out that the arch spandrels had golden mosaic decorations, a few pieces of ornamental stucco border no doubt belong to the mihrāb; until its discovery their exact place could not be determined.<sup>(6)</sup> The Mihrāb is broader than the axial width of the middle aisle and almost as high as the full height to the mosque.<sup>(7)</sup>

1. Ibid., I, p.95.

2. Bell, op.cit., p.233; Richmond, Moslem architecture, pp.49f.

3. Herzfeld, Erster, pp.11f, and his Archäologische Reise, I, p.93; E.M.A., II, p.258.

4. According to my measurement 2.60 m. wide 1.79 high.

5. Herzfeld, Erster, p.10; E.M.A. II, p.158.

6. Ibid., p.10.

7. Ibid., p.10.

At the time of Herzfeld's excavation there was room for a narrow window slit above the Mihrāb, wide doors covered with strips of wood flanked the Mihrāb on both sides [Fig. 35]. These doors lead into the south exterior rooms of the mosque and do not constitute a direct entrance from the outside. This entire Mihrāb wall had formerly been covered with wood, otherwise it is hard to see what the numerous traces of horizontal wooden beams on the surface of the wall can have been. Like the doors beside the Mihrāb every door and gate of the mosque was covered with strips of wood, in harmony with the simple perpendicular and horizontal lines of the supports, and the ceiling. A number of carved fragments of precious wood have been found in the area of the doors.<sup>(1)</sup>

#### The Fountain:

In the middle of the Saḥn (courtyard) of the mosque stood the remains of the great fountain, consisting of a monolithic basin 23 cubits in circumference and 7 cubits high; it was half a cubit in thickness.<sup>(2)</sup>

Ya'qūbī mentions this fountain in his account of this mosque. He says: "He (al-Mutawakkil) made it (The Mosque) good and spacious and strong. He placed a fountain in it, which played without ceasing."<sup>(3)</sup>

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1. Ibid., p.11.

2. Ibid., p.11; E.M.A., II, p.258.

3. Buldān, p.40.

Mustaufī gives the following description: "Further he (al-Mu'taṣim, should be al-Mutawakkil) built the Friday Mosque at Sāmarrā and set in the midst of its court a basin formed of one block of stone."<sup>(1)</sup> This was, as Herzfeld points out, called "Pharaoh Cup" [Kās-it-Fir aun].<sup>(2)</sup>

This basin has now been transferred to the "Museum of Arabic Antiquities," but was probably taken to Baghdād in the year 653 A.H., as is suggested by the text of a manuscript which describes it as: "a hollow stone looking like a fountain which came to Baghdād from Sāmarrā. Its diameter measured 7 cubits and it was known as Kās-it-Fir'aun".<sup>(3)</sup>

Herzfeld's excavations revealed that the great cylindrical foundation for the basin, constructed of lime and ash mortar, remained. The actual basin was placed over a base with a marble edging, remains of which were preserved. Fragments of marble columns and capitals and of stucco painted with gold plating, and of glass mosaics were found beside it, and it is to be concluded that a light baldechino or construction in the form of a circle on columns topped by a wooden roof or dome, rose above the cup of Pharaoh.<sup>(4)</sup> As Herzfeld points out, it was supplied by water from the East.<sup>(5)</sup>

1. Nuzhat al-Qulūb, p.48.

2. Erster, p.11; Cf. Archäologisch Reise, I, p.95.

3. al-'Asjād al-Masbūk, p.186 (b)

4. Herzfeld, Ester, p.11; E.M.A., II, p.258.

5. Archäologische Reise, I, p.95.

The Ziyādas (additions):

Creswell writes that: It is clear that a wall took off from the southern extremity of the southernmost curtain wall in the east and west sides, and the springing of a shallow vault, which is still preserved in the latter case,<sup>(1)</sup> can only mean that this wall was decorated with blind arcades, like the Court of Honour at Ukhaiḍir. At this point there appears to be a bevelled face running into the brickwork about 50 cm. from the outer face of the vault, at a point where a small hole can be seen. It seems as though the sixth circle-in-square (for which there would have been sufficient space) had been completed, that the arcades of the wall were an after-thought, that the brickwork was hacked out to provide an attachment for the vaulting and that the small gap of 50 cm. between the vault and the bevelled face was then filled in. Assuming that the proportion of width to height was the same as at Ukhaiḍir, these arches must have been 4 m. wide.<sup>(2)</sup>

An air photograph shows that these traces, which are scarcely visible when walking over the site, formed part of a great enclosure which surrounded the mosque on the east, north and west. This great rectangle is placed in a still greater enclosure, which surrounded it on all four sides, so as to leave three great open areas on the east, south and west sides, and a much narrower one on the north. The walls of these great enclosures, or (Ziyādas)

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1. Still better preserved in 1909; see Bell, op.cit., Fig. 141., where part of the circle-in-square can be seen.

2. E.M.A., II, p.259; S.A.E.M.A., p.277; E.I/2,1, art. "Architecture", p.620.

(= additions or extensions), were built of bricks, the majority of which have now been carried away.<sup>(1)</sup>

Herzfeld's excavations in 1912-13 showed that this outer enclosure measured 376 x 444m.<sup>(2)</sup> The total area of mosque and Ziyādas, therefore, amounted to almost 17 hectares or over 41 acres.<sup>(3)</sup>

On the analogy of the mosque of Ibn Tulūn at Cairo, one would expect to find buildings containing latrines and places for ablution with the enclosure (Ziyādas). Unfortunately Sarre and Herzfeld did not have time to excavate there.<sup>(4)</sup>

The later excavations carried out by the Department of Antiquities brought to light the foundations of a building, in the area close to the eastern wall. So far no information has been given by either the excavators or the Department concerning the function of this building.

We have seen that three broad "rows" each 100 black cubits (= 51.8m) in width, led from the main street, running from the Wādī Ibrāhīm ibn Riyāḥ, and that these three are bordered by bazaar stalls and are joined by a Cross Street.<sup>(5)</sup> Schwarz objects that

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1. E.M.A., II, p.259; S.A.E.M.A., p.277f; E.I./2. 1, art. "Architecture", p.620; D.A.I., Samarra, p.49.

2. Herzfeld, Mitterlung, p.204; E.M.A., II, p.259; S.A.E.M.A., p.278.

3. E.M.A., II, p.259; S.A.E.M.A., p.278.

4. Ibid., p.259; Ibid., p.278.

5. Ibid., p.259.



this implies a facade almost equal to one of the sides of the mosque, for these "rows" in question were the three great spaces left between the mosque proper and the walls of the outer enclosure.<sup>(1)</sup> The difficulty is imaginary for he has not taken count of the outer enclosure at which the "rows" must have ended; as this measures 376 x 444 m. it provides a target more than broad enough for the three "rows" to end it.<sup>(2)</sup>

The Malwīya: is the strangest minaret ever built in Iraq, and it is therefore most surprising that the historians completely neglect to mention its unusual shape. It has come to be known recently as al-Malwīya (= spiral) or the Minaret al-Malwīya (= The spiral tower). It seems that the first short description was given by Ross, who saw it in 1834, as "a round solid cone, on a low square base; the whole appearing to be upwards of 120 feet high, built of fine kiln-burnt bricks, ascended from without by a winding path (not steps) of five turns, keeping the left hand to the wall. On the top there is a small turret having a few steps of a staircase inside it. This is said to have been the place from the top of which the faithful were, in the days of the Khalifs, called to prayers on Friday."<sup>(3)</sup>

Some historians suggest that the reason for building the Malwīya so high was so that the voice of the Mu'adhahins could be

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1. Die 'Abbāsiden-Residenz Sāmarrā, p.31.
  2. E.M.A., II, p.259.
  3. J.G.R.S., XI, p.128.

easily heard, and the minaret could be seen at a distance of many parasangs.<sup>(1)</sup> Obviously the adhān carried to the whole area surrounding the mosque, where the Muslims had to attend prayers. The second part of this report is confirmed by Herzfeld who saw the minaret from as far away as 'Uḡaym, Balad and Ḥimrīn on his way from Kirkuk to Dūr.<sup>(2)</sup>

It was not described well, as I have said, by the ancient Arab historians,<sup>(3)</sup> and the same is true of the minaret of the Great Mosque of al-Manṣūr in Baghdād.<sup>(4)</sup>

The Malwīya stands outside the walls completely isolated in the Ziyāda about 27.20 m.<sup>(5)</sup> from the north wall of the mosque, exactly on its middle axis [Fig. 23].

This style of isolating the minaret from the mosque seems to have been followed in Iraq for the first time during the

1. Futūḥ, p.461; But Maqdisī, p.122 says only that the mosque has a long minaret; and Ya'qūt in Mu'jam, III, p.17 quoted what Balādhurī says in Futūḥ.
2. Erster, p.13.
3. Just al-Tha'alībī in Lata'if al-Ma'ārif, p.161, and Mustawfī in Nuzhat al-Qulub, p.49 mention its height.
4. Khatīb, I, p.107, only mentions its name when he refers to the wooden columns of the Great Mosque, Cf. Le Strange, op.cit., p.34; al-Amīd, op.cit., p.276.
5. There is no unanimity opinion among the authors concerning the distance between the southern base of the minaret and the northern wall of the mosque. Herzfeld, in Sāmarrā, p.23, mentions the distance as 28 m. Crewell in E.M.A., II, p.259, and his S.A.E.M.A., p.278, gives the distance as 27.25 m. The Department of Antiquities gives the number as 25 m. Susa in R.S., I, p.112, gives the same figure as the Department; Moḥammad, art. "The Elaboration of the 'Abbāsids on the Minaret", B.C.A.B.U., p.157, gives the distance as 27.30 m.

Islamic period. However, it is not easy to confirm this assumption, since we have not enough information concerning the location of the minaret in the earlier mosques of Iraq, Baṣrah, Kūfa, Wāsiṭ and Baghdād. However we have the statement presented by al-Khaṭīb about the columns of the Great Mosque of al-Manṣūr; most of the columns were constructed of two or more beams or baulks of timber, joined together endwise with glue, and clamped with iron bolts. But some five or six columns, those near the minaret, were formed each of a single tree-trunk.<sup>(1)</sup> In this case it may be easy to conclude that the minaret of the Mosque of al-Manṣūr was located inside the mosque for these wooden columns were constructed within the mosque surrounding the courtyard.<sup>(2)</sup> Nevertheless, no one can make a definite decision about whether it was attached to the building of the mosque or separated from it.<sup>(3)</sup>

The Malwiya has been greatly damaged, especially the base and the first round stage, where the original features were nearly hidden under heaps of debris, bricks and fragments<sup>(4)</sup> [Fig. 36]. But these parts have all been restored by the Department of Antiquities of Iraq (1936-1937), and the surrounding debris has

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1. Khatīb, I, p.107f.

2. Le Strange, *op.cit.*, p.34; Herzfeld, *Archäologische Reise*, I, pp.136-8; *E.M.A.*, II, p.31; al-Amīd, *op.cit.*, pp.270-278.

3. Moḥammad in *The Minaret and its relationship to the Mosque in early Islam*, p.180 states that an examination of many plans of mosques belonging to various periods has shown there was no general rule regarding the position or the number of minarets in any of the mosques.

4. Jones who saw the minaret in 1846 found heaps of bricks, glass, pottery and fragments strewn in every direction, see *J.R.G.S.*, XVIII, p.8.

been removed. The original structure of the base has been completely re-constructed, and the round stages as well as the spiral ramp reconstructed.<sup>(1)</sup> [Fig. 37] But unfortunately, as Creswell states, some large masses of brickwork which formed part of the ramp have almost disappeared in the process.<sup>(2)</sup>

The base formed two squares [Fig. 38], one above the other, the total height of the two being 4.20m.<sup>(3)</sup> The lower section measures 31.50 m. and there is a projecting frieze running round the four sides of each measuring 15 cm. so the total length of this section would be 15 cm. + 31.50 m. + 15 cm. = 31.80 m.<sup>(4)</sup> The upper base stands immediately above the former and measures 30.60 m. x 30.40 m.

Each side of the base is decorated with a number of rectangular recessed niches [Fig. 39]; there are six niches on the southern side and on each of the others there are nine niches.

This base, as Herzfeld mentions, was connected with the northern wall of the mosque by a foundation 25 m. long and 13 m. wide.<sup>(5)</sup> This foundation seems to have ended in a small bridge

1. D.A.I., Sāmarrā, p.45.
2. E.M.A., II, p.261.
3. Creswell in E.M.A., II, p.261 and in E.I./2, I, art. "Architecture" p.620 refers to the height of the base as 3 m.
4. Figures mentioned above are according to my measurements, and they completely correspond to those given by Moḥammad, B.C.A.B.U., p.157; But Herzfeld in Erster, p.12 refers to the length as 32 m., Creswell in E.M.A., II, p.260 and in E.I./2, art. "Architecture" p.620 mentions the figure as 33. The Department of Antiquities Sāmarrā, p.44 mentions the length as 32.
5. Erster, p.12, but Creswell who quoted the phrase from Herzfeld made in E.M.A., II, p.260, the width over 12m. while Moḥammad in B.C.A.B.U., p.157 refers to 26 m. long and 12.80 wide.

less than a metre in span leading to the lower base, and then to the beginning of the spiral ramp on the upper base.<sup>(1)</sup>

Above the base the minaret rises about 50 m.<sup>(2)</sup> forming a great helical tower, a spiral ramp leads to it from the base, starting at the centre of the south side, where the commencement of this ramp measures 1.95 m.<sup>(3)</sup> At the second spiral it measures 1.30 m. The spiral shaft winds round in an anti-clockwise direction,<sup>(4)</sup> and the rise of each turn is 6.10 m. but as the length of each successive turn is less than the previous one it follows that the slope inevitably becomes steeper and steeper.<sup>(5)</sup>

A number of holes are to be seen at the edge of the ramp, and this led Herzfeld to suggest that the ramp originally had a wooden balustrade supported by wooden uprights.<sup>(6)</sup>

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1. Herzfeld, Erster, p.12; Cf. E.M.A., II, p.260; Moḥammad, op.cit., p.157.
  2. Herzfeld gives the total height of the minaret in Archäologische Reise, I, p.96 as 53.675 m. and he gives the height of the minaret above the base in Erster, p.13, as 50 m. It seems most of the accounts copied Herzfeld's figure, see E.M.A., II, p.261; S.A.E.M.A., p.278; R.S., I, p.112; Moḥammad, op.cit., p.157. But the Department of Antiquities Samarra, p.44, gives the height of the minaret with the base as 52 m.
  3. Creswell in E.M.A., II, p.260, E.I./2, I, art. "Architecture", p.620 and in S.A.E.M.A., p.278, mentions the measurements as 2.30 m; Moḥammad, op.cit., p.158, mentions the figure as 1.92 at the beginning of the first step and about 1.5 m. in the last step.
  4. Cf. E.M.A., II, p.261; S.A.E.M.A., p.278; E.I./2, I, art. "Architecture", p.620. Moḥammad, op.cit., p.158.
  5. Creswell, E.I./2, I, art. "Architecture", p.620; E.M.A. II, p.261.
  6. Herzfeld, Erster, p.12.

After the fifth turn comes the summit which is cylindrical and measures about 6 m. high.<sup>(1)</sup> It is decorated on the outside with eight similar recesses, each set in a shallow frame topped by a pointed arch resting on a pair of little brick columns [Fig. 40]. The southern niche forms a doorway and the ramp ends at it; it opens on to a steep staircase, at first straight and then spiral, leading to the top platform.<sup>(2)</sup>

Herzfeld saw eight holes on this platform and on their evidence suggested that a little wooden pavilion was situated there supported on eight wooden columns.<sup>(3)</sup> The Mu'adhhdhins used to call the faithful to prayer five times daily, however severe the weather, from the top of the minaret, and such a shelter could have been necessary to protect them from sun and rain. Moreover, ath-Tha'alibī states that al-Mutawakkil used to climb the minaret of Sāmarrā on a donkey<sup>(4)</sup> in order to enjoy the attractive view of the town that is to be obtained from the summit.

No mention has been made of the decoration of the minaret by either the historians or recent archaeologists. Obviously the body of the Malwiya was not coated with any kind of embellishment, and the architects desire, it would seem, was satisfied by placing the bricks in horizontal rows. The only

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1. Herzfeld, Sāmarrā, p.24.

2. Herzfeld, Erster, pp.12f; E.M.A., II, p.261.

3. Herzfeld, Erster, p.13.

4. Lata'if al-Ma'ārif, p.161.



adornment was the series of rectangular recessed niches on the four sides of the base. The style of niched decoration on the upper section was known; it was developed by the Sasanians and in Assyrian times,<sup>(1)</sup> it became popular in Islamic architecture. It appears for example in the Dome of the Rock where each of the outer walls is decorated by seven tall narrow recessed panels, or, rather later, in the tomb of Zubaida in Baghdād.

#### D - BALKUWĀRĀ

This site consists of an immense field of ruins, known today as Manqūr, about 6 km. south of modern town of Sāmarrā. At the southern extremity of the vast area of ruins, a great arch known as 'The Camel' in the midst of an immense but quite regularly laid out area, led Herzfeld to excavate here between July 12th and October, 1911.<sup>(2)</sup>

Herzfeld soon found that he had to do with an immensely large palace [Fig. 41] consisting of a rectangular walled area of 1250 m. a side flanked by towers. Its south side rested on the banks of Tigris, here 15m. high. His provisional account, the only one that has so far appeared, reads as follows:<sup>(3)</sup>

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1. Bell, Palace and Mosque at Ukhaiḍir, p.156.
  2. Erster, p.32; E.M.A., II, p.265, D.A.I., Sāmarrā, p.68; R.S., I, p.127.
  3. E.M.A., II, p.265, Herzfeld's statement mentioned below quoted from Creswell's translation.



This square has three gates, one at the middle of each of the landward walls and it is cut through by two broad, intersecting main streets after the fashion of a Roman legionary camp. The areas between the buildings taking into consideration an ancient water course within the square. On the side bordered by the river the south, west arm of the main street is missing and instead of it there is a second castrum, a rectangular of about 460 x 575 m. surrounded by bastion wall and reaching from the shore to the intersecting point of the two main streets.

The inner palace, the plan of which is given in [Fig. 41] has only one great entrance in the middle of its north east wall, exactly at the centre of the quadrangular area at the crossing of the streets. The rectangle is divided into three parallel strips as at Mshatta, and also in the Qaşar-al-‘Ashiq. The middle strip contains, one behind the other, the monumental gateways, the courts of honour, and the throne-room. In Balkuwārā there are three courts and the halls, nine in number, are arranged cruciform fashion. A strong axial symmetry is maintained. The throne rooms open on the third court as open halls and also towards the river.

Outside the line of the castrum wall at this point was a garden, surrounded by walls with plasters which ended on the shore itself in richly decorated pavilions. There was a harbour outside the garden, and in the middle of the garden a water basin. The facades on the court along the garden face are triple arched facades as also in the Bayt-al-Khalifa and in the Mshatta. The

scheme of the triple arched facades, in which the middle arch exceeds the lateral ones in height and span, derives from Hellenistic street entrances and triumphal arches. Halls opening in this fashion on the analogy both of older and of more modern oriental palaces, must be regarded as halls of public audiences. A famous Sasanian example is the hall of Tāq Kisrā at Ctesiphon. That these halls evidently served for public audiences is indicated amongst other evidence by a passage in the Kitāb-al-Aghānī, so rich in details for the history of culture. A. Bedawi says: "I was with one of the princes of Sāmarrā, who allowed me to enter a room which was like the hall of Kisra". The two outer halls on the transverse axis have the  $\perp$  form usual in Sāmarrā. Of the five inner halls arranged in the form of a cross, the middle one which has a square form served for private audiences. Between the arms of the cross are four groups of rooms exactly alike each of which consists of eight rooms round about a little square court, whereas the large halls were roofed with wood or on occasion possibly even vaulted. The smaller rooms had brick vaults with coffering, the forms of which were closely related to those of Hellenistic architecture. In front of the  $\perp$  halls of the transverse axis were courts around which there were more living-rooms amongst them a very luxurious bath once lined with marble.

The decoration was uniform, and its aesthetic effect depended on the impressiveness of its enormous scale and eternal rhythm of the repetition rather than on the quality of

its execution. Whereas in private houses the patterns on each wall aimed at variety, in the palaces the same simple pattern, which characterises the first style, dominated over all.

Over the dadoes are wall niches, in three tiers in the main halls, the lowest being square while the next was a tall niche with pointed arches, and above that was a circle. The small rooms had square niches below, and above them were four lobed or pointed oval niches. All three tiers are nowhere completely preserved. Some rooms also possessed fresco paintings with gilding in addition to the stucco decoration, as could in Herzfeld's day still be seen in the pavilions on the river. The triple-arched facade was decorated with glass mosaics on a gold background of which the basic elements were obviously great tendrils. The colours are exclusively green, graduated from golden green to dark green, with mother of pearls for buds and fruits and gold for the background. Gold, green, and mother-of-pearl occupy about equal proportions. The doors of the room were made of fine wood richly painted and gilt and garnished with nails of gilt copper. The windows were filled with great coloured glass bull's-eyes, in the colours of which occurred blue, dark and light ochre, dark green, madder red or violet and clear glass. From these scanty remains it is possible to conceive some idea, however vague, of the splendour of the decoration of the rooms.

The two side tracts of the great rectangle contain an agglomeration of single houses. On account of the size of the palace the space between the river and the line of the inner side

of the third court of honour was sufficient for these houses and the space alongside the first two courts remained nearly bare. In this way a division on the transverse axis was achieved in just the same way as in 'Āshiq. The single houses are typical of the private houses in Sāmarrā. They consist of 16 rooms each, grouped round the court. The court have the proportion 2:3. At one end is the side L-shaped hall. These houses served as the residences of the household or perhaps for the (ḥarim) of the prince. In the northern strip the single elements were usually laid out somewhat differently. Amongst them was a bazaar street and great courts, which probably served as barracks for the infantry and cavalry of the bodyguards. In the description of the quarters like those of Balkwārā with which Mūtasim invested his generals at the foundation of Sāmarrā. Ya'qūbī says again that each of these quarters contained barracks for the troops, a little bazaar for their needs, baths and mosques. In the description of the (qaṭā'i) of Ibn-Tūlūn, Maqrīzī mentions a great square for polo. All this exists in Balkuwārā. From the analogy of Mshattā and Ukhaiḍir one would expect to find a mosque in the tract of the right of the first two courts of Honour. Both these places are oriented towards Mecca. The mosque of Mshatta lies on the right of the entrance and is easily recognisable, the miḥrāb in the middle of the south wall of the hall. In Ukhaiḍir where one enters from the north side the mosque lies in the similar position, to the right of the entrance. It is a

regular portico-mosque with the mihṛāb in its deep south hall. Bulkuwārā deviates  $45^{\circ}$  from the qibla so that a properly oriented mosque would be noticeable at a glance. Architecture differentiated in this way is to be seen on the right of the second court, at the point where a triple gateway pierces the wall of the court. It is to be identified as the mosque. It measures about 15 x 13 m. and had two rows of light columns each, the material of which was teak or marble. Only traces of their position survived in the foundations. The base measurement is 50 cm. (= 1 cubit). Even the enclosure walls, because they were of burnt bricks, have been carried away down to their foundations, so that the form of the mihṛāb is no longer recognisable. But in the southern strip lying opposite Herzfeld found a second smaller mosque, of which the simple hall measured 7.76 x 10.35 m. (= 15 x 20 cubits). It was built of mud bricks and had therefore not been pillaged. It has three doors (archways E.H.) in its north wall and its mihṛāb consists of a deep round niche, flanked by half-columns and surrounded by a cyma moulding forming a rectangular frame. The larger mosque may be restored on the same lines. The palace of Balkuwārā is not only, on account of its size, an architectural work of the first order, it is in addition rich in architectural ideas. Thus one may observe the most impressive in effect obtained by the proportion and the laying out of the courts and by the varying form of the gateways, culminating in the triple-arched facade decorated with mosaic. In a similar way the material used for the building

improves in quality from that of the surroundings to the mud brickwork of the first court and the side tracts, and the baked brickworks of the third court and the throne-room.

Doubly skilful is the use of the site. First of all the palace is so placed that anyone standing in the central room sees towards the north-west, the mighty line of the halls, the three Courts of Honour with their gateways and the halls, the garden, the river and the limitless undulating plain of the Jazira. In the transverse axis appears towards the north-west over the halls and houses of the side tracts, the valley of the river and two and a half leagues away, the Qaşir-al-‘Āshīq and the Qubbat-as-Sulaibīyā, to the south-east the head of the Qaṭūl canal with the tower of al-Qāi’m. Such an axial composition is of incomparable grandeur and monumental effect. In the second place, moreover, the great area is not quite even, and the slight differences in the level are employed and increased so that the whole middle strip is somewhat higher than the side strips, and in it again there is a rise from court to court.

The floor level of the Throne-Room is at a higher level than all the other parts of the Palace, it being on much the same level as the flat roofs of the lateral strips.<sup>(1)</sup>

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1. Erster, pp.33-9.

Identification and Date:

Arabic references disagree in their rendering of the name of this Palace.<sup>(1)</sup> It is known as Balkuwārā,<sup>(2)</sup> Barkuwar, Bolkuwar, Bazkuwār,<sup>(3)</sup> Barkuwānā, Barkuwān<sup>(4)</sup> and Barkuwār.<sup>(5)</sup>

Ya qūbī says that al-Mutawakkil established his son Muḥammād al-Muntaṣir in the Palace of al-Mu'taṣim, his son Ibrāhīm al-Mu'ayyad in al-Maṭira, and his son al-Mu'tazz behind al-Maṭira to the eastward at the palace called Balkuwārā. The building then became continuous from Balkuwārā to the end of the place called ad-Dūr, a space of four farsakhs (about 20 km.) Ya'qūbī a little later on was added the construction of al-Mutawakkil a new city to the north of Sāmarrā, the buildings now extended without a break from al-Ja'fariya to a place called ad-Dūr, and beyond to al-Karkh and Surra-man-ra'ā, as

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1. The word is originally non Arabic but Persian, as ad-Dūjaylī records in 'Ālam al-Ghad, 16 October, 1948, p.24, its exact pronunciation is "Buzurkuwar" [i.e. The immense palace].
  2. Buldān, p.40.
  3. Ṭabarī, III, p.1860; Mu'jam, I, p.605.
  4. Mu'jam, III, p.18.
  5. Ibid., IV, p.440.



far as the place in which his son 'Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Mu'tazz used to live. In between, there was no open ground and no gaps and no place without building, that is for a length of several farsakhs.

As I have mentioned at the beginning of this section the monument of Balkuwārā is nowadays known as Manqūr. Herzfeld concludes that the distances given by Ya'qūbī correspond to those of the Palace ruins. It also forms the south end of the corner along the banks of the Tigris; otherwise the boundary of the suburbs of the Sāmarrā, the ruins of Manqūr are therefore Balkuwārā.<sup>(1)</sup>

Thus Balkuwārā must be dated to the reign of al-Mutawakkil that is between 232-247 A.H./847-861 A.D. But we can narrow down the date, for Herzfeld found on several of the teak-wood tie-beams used to sustain the brickwork of the wall-piers from which the great arches of the hall spring, the following words carved in simple Kufic:<sup>(2)</sup>

"The Prince al-Mu'tazz billah, son of the Prince of Believers."

This is the oldest arabic inscription from Mesopotamia. "Amir, Prince" is the usual official title of the son of the Califs of Mutawakkil. Instead of his name Abū 'Abd Allāh

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1. Erster, p.33.

2. Erster, p.33; E.M.A., II, p.296.

Talḥa, the prince bears his Imam-title "al-Mu'tazz bi-llāh" which he took after his accession to the crown of the calif. Also the historians ibn Khaldūn and ibn al-Athīr noted that Mutawakkil had paid homage already since 849 to his three sons Muḥammad al-Muntaṣir, Ibrāhīm al-Mū'ayyad and Abū 'Abdallāh al-Mū'tazz as potential successors to the throne, therefore Abū

Abd Allāh received the title of al-Mu'tazz bi-llāh, his own standard and the province of Khūrasān, Tahrīstān, Rayy, Armenien, Adhrbaydjān and Fārs as a fee. Five years later he also received the public treasure in every country and the mint houses and his name was inscribed on the Dirhem.

Herzfeld also found a copper coin in Sāmarrā with the legend, which is not completely preserved.<sup>(1)</sup> The evidence of the coinage shows that there is an error here, for his name Abū 'Abdallāh appears from the year (235 A.H./849 A.D.) as master of the mint on the coinage of the whole empire but his Imam title al-Mū'tazz bi-llāh does not appear until (240 A.H./854 A.D.) It is therefore clear that he only obtained his Imam title in that year. The inscription on the wooden beams, mentioned above consequently cannot be earlier than (240 A.H./854 A.D.). On the other hand Balkuwārā must almost certainly have been built before (245 A.H./859 A.D.) for al-Mutawakkil's whole onergy must have been devoted to the founding

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1. Erster, p.33.

of his new city al-Ja'fariya. Thus Balkuwārā must be dated (240-245 A.H./854-9 A.D.)<sup>(1)</sup>

Creswell records that Rhuvon Guest pointed out to him that the original sources for the facts stated by ibn al-Athīr and ibn Khaldūn is Ṭabarī, who calls al-Mutawakkil's third son Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad or some say Zubayr.<sup>(2)</sup> He does not call him Ṭalḥa. Moreover the Abū 'Abd Allāh named on the coinage of 235 A.H. is not necessarily al-Mu'tazz at all. So there is no reason for refusing to accept the statement that al-Mutawakkil gave his son the title of al-Mu'tazz in 235 A.H. Ṭabarī is in agreement with the evidence of the coinage, for he says on the same page that the name of al-Mu'tazz was stamped on the coinage in 240 A.H. Therefore presumably not before that. Balkuwārā must be placed between (235 and 245 A.H./849-859 A.D.)

#### E - THE TOWN OF AL-MUTAWAKKILIYA

Al-Mutawakkil had a passionate attachment for building and was one of the most magnificent builders of the period of the 'Abbasid Caliphate at Sāmarrā.

His reign was distinguished by a large number of Palaces, buildings and mosques; he built the great mosque of Sāmarrā,

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1. Ibid., p.33.

2. III, p.1394.

The mosque of abū dulaf, al-Mutawakkiliya town, and the Palaces, al-Badi', al-Būrj, Balkuwārā, al-Bahū, al-Jami', al-Ja'farī, al-Jawsaq, as-Sindan, ash-Shāh, aṣ-Ṣabiḥ, al-'Arūs, al-Gharīb, Lu'lu', al-Mukhtār.

Yā'qūt says: that none of the Califs at Sāmarrā had erected such great buildings as al-Mutawakkil had constructed. (1)

All these buildings cost him a great deal of money. Yā'qūt gives the total sum as 294 million Dirham, (2) Mas'ūdī also mentions the exorbitant expenses which were incurred by all his architectural works. He says: "It was said that the level of expenditure during al-Mutawakkil's reign was higher than that reached during the period of any other dynasty." (3)

He lived at the beginning of his reign in the Palace of al-Hārūnī, (4) but later in the year 245 A.H./859 A.D. he ordered the astronomer, Muḥammad ibn Musa and some Architects to select a site. (5)

The Palace which was finally selected was known as Maḥuza, (6)

1. Mu'jam, III, p.17.

2. Ibid., III, p.18.

3. Murūj, VII, p.276.

4. Buldān, p.40; Futūḥ, p.460; Mu'jam, III, p.17.

5. Buldān, p.41.

6. Ṭabarī, III, p.1438; according to Ya'qūbī's statement, Buldān, p.41, called the site chosen by the astronomer Muḥammad ibn Musa, as Maḥuza, but Yā'qūt in Mu'jam, III, p.18 mentions that the Palace which was constructed in al-Mutawakkiliya was called Maḥuza.

Ya'qūbī states that it was previously examined by al-Mu'taṣim when he was looking for a suitable location for his capital,<sup>(1)</sup> although none of the historians except Ya'qūbī mentions that.<sup>(2)</sup>

The new town, al-Mutawakkiliya was situated about 10 km. north of Sāmarrā beginning from the building at the extreme boundary of Dūr al- 'Arabānī, which was regarded as terminal point of al-Mu'taṣim's construction. About 20 Km. at the north of modern town of Sāmarrā.<sup>(3)</sup>

Nowadays the remains of this town lie between the canal known as Nahr ar-Raṣāṣ and the Tigris<sup>(4)</sup> [Fig. 42]. Over the Raṣāṣī river was a viaduct called Qanṭarat ar-Raṣāṣī [The leaden viaduct] which was over the larger branch of an-Nahrawān. Its foundation which consisted of large artificial stones joined together by iron clamps and melted lead were still visible in 1834 when Ross visited this area.<sup>(5)</sup>

The remains of al-Ja'fariya have been identified by Herzfeld "It is a vast enclosure," he writes, "covering about

1. Buldān, P.41.

2. However, Balādhurī in Futūḥ, p.460, mentions that Mutawakkiliya occupied some area, the Maḥuza village was part of this area he says: "al-Mutawakkil found a city which he called al-Mutawakkiliya. He built it between al-Karkh and al-Qaṭūl, chose it for his abode and gave fiels in it. The houses and the villages are known as al-Maḥuza.

3. R.S., I, p.129.

4. E.M.A., II, p.277.

5. J.R.G.S., XI, p.129.

$1\frac{1}{3}$  square Km. surrounded by bastioned walls of mud-brick. It forms an irregular polygon lying between the high Tigris bank and the canal. At a point on this canal, about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  Km. north of the mosque of Abū Dulaf and about 1 Km. north of the Qanṭarat ar-Raṣaṣ [See Fig. 1, Map No.1]. He found an entrance to the enclosure from which a straight street cut through the palace area in a direction  $70^{\circ}$  W. of S.<sup>(1)</sup> Susa mentions that it is possible to see the immense enclosure in the year 1948 surrounding the Mutawakkiliya along a distance of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  km. He also mentions that there is another enclosure on the stretch of the southern town between the right bank of al-Qaṭūl and Tigris, which separates the town of al-Mutawakkiliya from Sāmarrā which lies on the south. There was a big gate situated at the middle of the above mentioned enclosure forming the main entrance to the town.<sup>(2)</sup> Halls, Courts and streets, all of which were very uniformly laid out, could still in 1908 be recognized. The walls were indicated by narrow ridges rising a few decimetres above the surface of the debris. The building material appeared to have been mostly mud brick with a sparing of burnt brick. Creswell points out that Herzfeld told him that this area has not yet been excavated.<sup>(3)</sup>

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1. Archäologische Reise, p.66; The Statement above mentioned quoted from Creswell's translation, E.M.A., II, p.277.

2. R.S., I, p.129.

3. E.M.A., II, p.277.

So far there is no reference which indicates that the Mutawakkiliya town has received any scientific investigation. The two reports produced by the Department of Antiquities about Sāmarrā record that no serious work was undertaken in order to produce information about the architecture at this site.

One of these two reports makes it clear that the excavation carried out by the Department of Antiquities in the year 1936-39 was excavated in four places on both sides of the greater street.<sup>(1)</sup>

Evidently, most of the sources show that al-Mutawakkil started to erect the town in the year 245 A.H./859 A.D.<sup>(2)</sup> and it appears that he moved from Sāmarrā before starting to build the new city. It was stated that al-Muḥammadiya was the place from which he chose to supervise and direct the work.<sup>(3)</sup> The work was described by Ya'qūbī as follows: "First of all, he ordered the canal, which Mu'taṣim had considered digging there, to be dug in the middle of the town, the expenditure on the canal was estimated at 1,500,000 Dinars.

1. D.A.I., Ḥafriyyāt Sāmarrā, p.2.

2. Buldān, p.41; Ṭabarī, III, p.1438; Kāmil, VII, p.56. Balādhurī in Futūḥ, p.461 states that the occupation of al-Mutawakkiliya took place at the beginning of the year 246 and he also states that the construction of this town took a few months. From this it can be concluded that the building started in the year 245 A.H.

3. Ṭabarī, III, p.1438.



Then he ordered a place to be marked out for his palaces, and residences, and gave land to his heirs and the rest of his sons, his leaders, his clerks, his troops, and the people in general.

He lengthened the Shār'i al-A'zam (The Great Street) by about three farsakhs from the palace of Ashnās, which was in al-Karkh and afterwards belonged to al-Faṭḥ ibn Khāqān, so that it reached his palaces. In front of his palace he made three great gates through which a horseman could pass with his lance. He gave land to the people to the right and left of the Shār'i al-A'zam and made its breadth 200 cubits (i.e. 100 m). "(1)

Ross traced the remains of this street, and describes it as follows: "a road of lime and pebbles about 80 yards in breadth, having a parapet on either side, leads in a straight line to Chenab." (2) The width which is given by Ya'qūbī and Ross has been confirmed by the Department of Antiquities and described as being 100 m., the street keeps running straight for about 7 Km. with a series of perpendicular streets ending on its sides [See Fig. 43]. (3)

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1. Buldān, p.41.
  2. J.R.G.S., XI, p.129.
  3. D.A.I., Sāmarrā, p.9.

Ya'qūbī continues his report that Mutawakkil planned that a canal should be dug on either side of it, fed by water from the great canal which he was also digging. The palaces were built, the houses were erected and buildings sprang up. He himself used to go about here and there rewarding and giving presents to those whom he saw diligent in construction, so the people worked hard.<sup>(1)</sup> Some of the buildings, it would seem, had already been finished and extended without a break from al-Ja'fariya to the place called ad-Dūr at the north and beyond to al-Karkh and Sāmarrā as far as the place in which his son Abū Abdāllah al-Mu'tazz used to live (Balkuwārā). In between there was open ground and no gaps and no places without buildings. That is for a length of seven farsakhs (about 35 Km.)

The buildings were completed in a year. The markets were established in a separate place; one was established in each square and division of the town.<sup>(2)</sup>

On 1st Muḥarram on the year (247 A.H./17th March 861 A.D.) al-Mutawakkil moved to the city. And when he sat in audience he gave large rewards to the people and he gave payment to all the military and civil officers and to everyone who had taken any part in the work. His joy was complete and he says:

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1. Buldān, p.42.

2. Ibid., p.42.

"Now I know that I am [indeed] a King, for I have built myself a town and live in it."<sup>(1)</sup>

The state offices were transferred to this place [namely] the Minister of Land Taxation, State Domains, Troops and Followers, Freedmen and slaves, posts and the rest; only the canal was not completed successfully for the flow of water in it was feeble and intermittent, notwithstanding that the Calif had spent on it something like a million dīnārs. But the excavation was particularly difficult, for they had to dig in pebbles and stones, on which the picks could not make an impression.<sup>(2)</sup>

Al-Mutawakkil lived in the Ja'fariya Palace nine months and three days. He was murdered in it, the most unlucky of Palaces, on the third day of Shawwāl 247 A.H./11th Dec. 861 A.D.<sup>(3)</sup>

#### F - ABŪ DŪLAF MOSQUE

Abū Dūlaf Mosque is situated about 15 Km. to the north of the part of the modern town<sup>(4)</sup> [See Fig. 1 Map No.1], that was built by al-Mutawakkil and named as the city of al-Ja'fariya after him as Ya'qūbī states [Fig. 44]<sup>(5)</sup>

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1. Ibid., p.42.

2. Ibid., p.42.

3. Ibid., 42f.

4. D.A.I., Sāmarrā, p.66.

5. Buldān, p.42.

In general this mosque is similar to the Great Mosque at Sāmarrā, but today the outer walls of the mosque of Abū Dūlaf have been destroyed though the interior structure is preserved in contrast to the interior structure of the mosque at Sāmarrā which has disappeared because it was not constructed of baked brick, while its outer walls of baked brick have been preserved. (1)

It would seem that in general its plan followed closely those of earlier Mosques in Iraq at Kufa, Waṣiṭ and in the Great Mosque of Sāmarrā.

The ground plan of the actual mosque which is preserved in all its main parts, was laid out on a very simple plan. (2) It is rectangular, as is that of the Sāmarrā mosque, but is smaller in area, the longer side being 222.80 m. long from south to north while the narrow side, from east to west, measures 138.26 m. (3)

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1. Herzfeld, Archäologische Reise, I, pp.90 and 70; E.M.A., II p.278; S.A.E.M.A., p.282; D.A.I., Sāmarrā, p.67; Fransis and Ali, art. "Jami' Abi Dulaf fi Sāmarrā", Sumer, III, (1947) p.63.
  2. Herzfeld, Archäologische Reise, I, p.70; Miss Bell refers in Amurath to Amurath, p.245 to the measurement as 213.20 x 136.50 m.
  3. Herzfeld, Archäologische Reise, I, p.70; Creswell in E.M.A., II, p.278; S.A.E.M.A., p.282, gives the measurements as 213 m. from north to south and 135 m. from east to west. Fransis and Ali, op.cit., p.63 give the measurements as 215.47 m. from south to north and 138.24 m. from east to west where the total area being 29786.50 sq.m.

### The Outer Walls and the Towers

We mentioned earlier that the outer walls were built of mud and nothing survives today to give an idea of the original construction, though thanks to intensive research and study quite a number of questions have been answered.<sup>(1)</sup>

As Miss Bell states, the outer walls were in (1909) no better than a crumbling mound,<sup>(2)</sup> today they are indicated by long ridges, except on the north side where they are preserved to a height of 5 to 7 m.<sup>(3)</sup>

It was found that this part of the walls was 1.60 m. thick. It was built with mud-brick, the internal and external faces covered with plaster. Like the Sāmarrā Mosque these walls were supported and strengthened by semi-circular towers.<sup>(4)</sup>

Herzfeld states that the north and south walls each had intervals, the east and west had 13 each. These intervals are not quite equal, but their average height is about 14m.<sup>(5)</sup>

1. Fransīs and 'Alī, op.cit., p.63. But the Department of Antiquities presents a measurement completely different than others in Sāmarrā, p.65 gives 158 m. x 108 m.
2. Amurath to Amurath, p.245.
3. E.M.A., II, p.278.
4. Fransīs and 'Alī, op.cit., p.63; Herzfeld points out in Archäologische Reise, I, p.71, that he measured in two different places as 1.40 m. and 1.45 m. but he states that the second measurement seems more correct to him for the place was better preserved.
5. Archäologische Reise, I, p.72.

It seems that Herzfeld is not certain as to the number of the towers and their measurements, for he had no time to move the debris surrounding them. They were so decayed he states that they could not be accurately measured [Fig. 45].<sup>(1)</sup>

All the semi circular towers stand on rectangular bases 3.10 x 1.90 m. and 1.90 high, their long sides parallel to the main wall; they are all made of bricks.<sup>(2)</sup> In each of the four corners of the wall there is a circular bastion 3.60 m. in diameter on a square base measuring 3.60 x 3.60. The base and the first 55 Cms. of the circular part of the tower were built of bricks and mortar, while the rest was of mud-brick.<sup>(3)</sup>

It appears that there is no unanimity of opinion among archaeologists concerning the number of the towers which supported the outer walls.

Miss Bell was able to recognise three bastions in the south wall in 1909,<sup>(4)</sup> according to her plan [Fig. 46], there were four corner bastions, apparently eleven intermediate ones to east and west, eight on the north side, and on the south side an uncertain number where she placed just three towers.<sup>(5)</sup>

1. Ibid., I, p.72.

2. Fransīs and 'Alī, op.cit., p.64.

3. Ibid., p.64.

4. Amurath to Amurath, p.245.

5. See her plan in Palace and Mosque at Ukhaiḍir, p.155.

Creswell agrees with Miss Bell regarding these towers,<sup>(1)</sup> but he suggests firstly that the south side probably had eight.<sup>(2)</sup> though afterwards he changed his mind, and suggested that the number might be six.<sup>(3)</sup>

But the later excavations carried out by the Department of Antiquities in Iraq have brought to light 42 towers, 10 in the Qibla wall, 8 in the northern wall and 10 in each of the eastern and western walls, and four at each corner.<sup>(4)</sup>

The Qibla wall has ten semicircular towers with the Mihrāb in the middle, projecting from the back of the wall. The two towers next to the corner towers were made of mud-brick and were followed by two of bricks and so on, making the total of six of mud brick and four of baked brick.<sup>(5)</sup>

The distance between the corner towers and the next two towers is 12.40 m. and that between each two successive towers is 4.60 m. while the distance between the Mihrāb projection and the nearest tower is 18 m.

The northern wall which is facing the Qibla wall has a

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1. See his E.M.A., II, p.281; S.A.E.M.A., p.284, and his plan Fig. 223, in E.M.A., II, p.280.
  2. E.M.A., II, p.281.
  3. S.A.E.M.A., p.284, Creswell gives the total number of the towers in E.M.A., II, p.281, as 42, but he gives a wrong total in S.A.E.M.A., p.284, for he mentions the number as 38, while it should be according to his count as 40.
  4. Fransis and 'Alī, op.cit., p.64.
  5. Ibid., p.64.



thickness of 1.80 m. and remains nearly as high as it was originally. In the centre it has an entrance facing the Minaret and the two halves also have towers distributed symmetrically. The distances between the successive 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th towers and the corner tower are 11.80 m., 24.40 m., 36.60 m. and 49.20 m. respectively. While the distance between the entrance and the nearest tower is 11.80 m. the towers are built of mud-brick and of baked brick mixed with mortar.<sup>(1)</sup>

Miss Bell noticed drainage runnels in the front of this wall.<sup>(2)</sup> Later excavations showed that they were constructed of bricks measuring about 20 cms. x 18 cms. They were similar to those used in the Great Mosque of Sāmarrā. Lack of time prevented the excavators from following up the study of these vertical runnels.<sup>(3)</sup> They probably contain a gutter pipe from the flat roof, their function seems to have been to drain away the water remaining after rain.

The tops of the other two walls (the eastern and the western) have completely collapsed and nothing can be seen of them but piles of mud.<sup>(4)</sup>

The investigations of the Iraqi archaeologists showed that

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1. Ibid., p.64.

2. Amurath to Amurath, p.246.

3. Fransīs and 'Alī, op.cit., p.64.

4. Ibid., p.64.

these walls were 1.60 m. thick; they were composed of ten semicircular towers of mud brick and they had entrances. The two walls were completely symmetrical and the distance between the corner bastion and the nearest tower was 35.80 m., while the distance between two successive towers was between 14 and 15 m. (1)

Herzfeld was not certain as to the size of the mud bricks used in the outer walls, in any of the places which he measured. (2) But later excavations have established that the average size of the bricks used was 27 x 27 x 7.5 cms., while the mud-bricks were 34 x 34 x 9.5 cms. (3) The thickness of the bricks presented by Herzfeld is slightly different to that established by the Department of Antiquities, for he measures 10 layers with their joints as 90 cms; the joints are on the average 2 cms., thick, so he concludes that the average thickness of a brick is about 7 cms. (4)

#### The Doorway:

Although the enclosing walls are in such a bad condition, it is possible to make out some of the doorways, because the jambs, which were built of burnt-brick, stand more or less

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1. Ibid., p.64.
2. Archäologische Reise, I, p.73.
3. Fransis and 'Alī, op.cit., p.64.
4. Archäologische Reise, I, p.73.

intact.<sup>(1)</sup> Miss Bell was the first to mention these doorways. According to her plan [See Fig. 46]<sup>(2)</sup> there were three doors on the north wall, one being in the centre, and six doors on both west and east walls; she thought that the fragment of burnt brick on the south wall was a door leading into a small building. She also suggests that there was a door in the eastern half of this wall and she concludes that there was a similar one in the western half,<sup>(3)</sup> this was confirmed later by the excavations of the Department of Antiquities [Fig. 47].<sup>(4)</sup>

Herzfeld gives no information about those doorways, except that he believes the gap in the centre of the south wall was a door.<sup>(5)</sup>

Creswell, as it seems, agreed with Miss Bell in respect of the nature and position of those doors.<sup>(6)</sup> One difference only can be seen in his plan, for he has omitted all the doors from the south wall [Fig. 48].<sup>(7)</sup>

1. Bell, Amurath to Amurath, pp.244f; E.M.A., II, p.281; S.A.E.M.A., p.284.
2. Miss Bell planned this mosque in 1909 in her book, Palace and Mosque at Ukhaiḍir, Fig. 33, p.155.
3. Amurath to Amurath, p.245; Cf. E.M.A., II, p.281.
4. The excavators point out op.cit., p.65, that the diggings which were aimed at cleaning the entrances and reaching the foundations showed that the two side gates led to a room 10 m. x 6 m. at each side constructed with bricks which were bonded to the wall. The floors of the rooms were covered with bricks, too, the isolation and position of these rooms indicate that they belonged to the person in charge of the mosque.
5. Archäologische Reise, I, p.73; Cf. E.M.A., II, p.281.
6. See his E.M.A., II, p.281; and his S.A.E.M.A., p.284.
7. See his plan in E.M.A., II, p.280, Fig. 223, and also his S.A.E.M.A., Fig. 58, p.281.

The last excavations in this mosque established that in the southern wall (Qibla) there were three gates, two of them adjacent to the corner towers, and the third in the middle near the mihrāb. The two side gates are about 2 m. away from the towers and are 1.58 m. wide. Their frames are 1.05 m. and bonded to the mud brick wall.<sup>(1)</sup>

The northern wall facing the Qibla, also had three gates, one at the centre and two at the sides. The central one had the minaret on its axis and it was 2.95 m. wide, while the one on the east side was 17.30 m. from the tower and the western one 17.50 m. from the opposite tower. Each door was 2.60 m. wide.<sup>(2)</sup>

In each of the eastern and western walls there were six doors, the first one from the southern end was 24 m. from the corner tower, and it was 2 m. wide at the outside face of the wall, decreasing gradually at the inner side to 1.45 m. The second door was situated 15.70 m. from the first one, the third, fourth and the sixth doors were 34 m. 64.50 m., 95.10 m. and 133.40 m. respectively, away from the first door. The distance between the sixth door and northern tower was 19.50 m.

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1. Fransis and 'Alī, op.cit., p.65.

2. Ibid., p.65.

these doors were 2.65 m. wide and they were all in symmetry with the ones on the opposite wall.<sup>(1)</sup>

It may thus be concluded that the mosque had 18 doors, three in the Qibla wall leading to sections on the southern part, three in the north wall with the central one leading to the minaret, and six doors at each of the eastern and western walls.<sup>(2)</sup>

### The Interior:

In the middle of this mosque, the saḥn (courtyard) is rectangular measuring 155.70 m. from north to south and 104.60 m. from east to west, forming an area of 16286.22 sq. m.<sup>(3)</sup> The Saḥn is surrounded by four parts of the mosque, the Ḥaram to the south, the north part and the western and eastern parts, all these parts forming arcades running from north to south.

The Ḥaram has sixteen arcades forming seventeen aisles (riwaqs). Each aisle consists of five arches with a span 3.12 m.<sup>(4)</sup> running towards the north, where twelve of the arches end in T-shaped piers at the southern side of the saḥn. They carry a transverse arcade of thirteen arches which form the south facade

1. Ibid., pp.65f.

2. Ibid., p.66.

3. Fransīs and 'Alī, op.cit., p.62; Herzfeld, in Archäologische Reise, I, p.71., gives the measurements as 160.75 m. x 104.25 m; Creswell in E.M.A., II, p.278 and S.A.E.M.A., p.282, gives the measurements as 155.80 x 103.93 m.

4. Herzfeld, Archäologische Reise, p.71, gives the measurements as 3.17 m. and Creswell in E.M.A., II, p.278 gives them as 3.13 m.

of the sahn - similar to those in the north part which form the northern facade of the sahn - the former average 4.16 m.<sup>(1)</sup> in span, but the central one is wider than the others, its entrance measuring 5.30 m. [Fig. 49].<sup>(2)</sup> It is flanked by two piers, each measuring 4.35 m. similar to those in the north part. Each pier forming the facade is decorated with a recessed panel. The space between the arcades at the northern and southern ends of the mosque averages 6.20 m., while the width of the central one is 7.30 m.<sup>(3)</sup>

The depth of the Haram is 29.20<sup>(4)</sup> [Fig. 50], this being the depth of all the arcades terminating to the south in T-shaped piers, which support a transverse arcade of seventeen arches running parallel to the south wall at a distance of about 10.60 m. from it.

1. Herzfeld, Archäologische Reise, pp.71, gives the measurement as 4.15 m.
2. The figure mentioned above is according to my measurement. Herzfeld, Archäologische Reise, p.71, gives the measurement as 5.24 m.; Franks and 'Alī, op.cit., p.66 mentions the figure 5.19 m.; Creswell in E.M.A., II, p.279 and in his S.A.E.M.A., p.283, quoted the measurement of Franks and 'Alī for he had already seen the report of the excavations in this mosque, which produced by them, as he points out, E.M.A., II, p.281.
3. Franks and 'Alī, op.cit., p.66; Herzfeld in Archäologische Reise, I, p.71, records that the width of the middle aisle is 8.17 m. and the others as 6.47; Miss Bell in Amurath to Amurath, p.245, gives the measurement as 6.20 m. to the small arcades and 7.33 m. to the central one.
4. Franks and 'Alī, op.cit., p.66; E.M.A., II, p.229. But Herzfeld, Archäologische Reise, I, p.71, give the depth of the Haram as 29.39 m.

In front of these seventeen arcades there is a transept 10.60 m. depth, extending along the whole width of the mosque, and situated between the Qibla wall and the last rows of the Haram arches which are parallel to the Qibla wall.<sup>(1)</sup>

In the middle of the transept placed eighteen bases of piers, two of them at the terminal rows are joined with the wall; the others measure 1.55 x 3.80 m.<sup>(2)</sup>

It seems that this transept is found for the first time in the Islamic mosques, and it gives the Mosque of Abu Dulaf, as Herzfeld points out<sup>(3)</sup> a unique position in the chain of the development of mosque planning.

Before the later excavations, it was difficult to know whether it was roofed or not, for as Miss Bell states the ruins give no indication.<sup>(4)</sup>

The Department of Antiquities in Iraq has reached no certain decision regarding the roof of the transept, though their statement says that the excavations brought to light bases which make the existence of the ceiling more likely.<sup>(5)</sup>

1. Herzfeld, Archäologische Reise, I, p.71, points out that the measurements of this transept as 10.50 x 135.46 m. while Miss Bell, Amurath to Amurath, p.245, gives the measurements as 10.40 m.; Creswell, E.M.A., II, p.279 refers to the figure which is given by Francis and 'Alī, op.cit. p.67 as 10.60 m.
2. Francis and 'Alī, op.cit., p.67.
3. Archäologische Reise, I, p.71.
4. Amurath to Amurath, p.245.
5. Francis and 'Alī, op.cit., p.67.



Although there are no signs nowadays of a ceiling either on the southern arches of the Ḥaram or on the demolished southern wall, it seems likely that the transept was roofed because it would be impossible for the worshipper to pray in an uncovered space in severe weather.

The two arcades at either end of the Ḥaram are extended right through to the north wall of this mosque [Fig. 51], forming 19 arches on the west and east sides, 14 m. in depth, inserted between the outer walls and the sahn.

All these arches facing the sahn form the western and eastern facade, the average space between each two of them is 4.15 m., except the central ones on both sides which measure 4.90 m. <sup>(1)</sup>

The piers which carry the arcades to east and west of the sahn, average 4.20 x 1.70 m. <sup>(2)</sup>

The fourth section of this mosque in the northern part, like the Ḥaram, has sixteen arcades forming seventeen aisles. Each aisle consists of three arches with an average span of 3.5 m. <sup>(3)</sup> running towards the south, where twelve of the arcades

1. Fransīs and 'Alī, *op.cit.*, p.66; Miss Bell in *Amurath to Amurath*, p.245 gives the same measurements, while Creswell, *E.M.A.*, II, p.279 gives the measurements as 4.15 m. for the ordinary arches, and 4.91 for the central one.
2. Fransīs and 'Alī, *op.cit.*, p.66; Miss Bell in *Amurath to Amurath*, p.245, gives the average measurements as 4.30 m. x 1.57 m.; Creswell in *E.M.A.*, II, p.279 quoted his measurements from Miss Bell.
3. Herzfeld, *Archäologische Reise*, I, p.72, gives the measurement as 3.10 m.; Creswell in *E.M.A.*, II, p.279, followed Herzfeld's measurement.

end in T-shaped piers at the northern side of the sahn [Fig. 52], just as in the Haram, carrying transverse arcades of thirteen arches which form the north facade of the sahn. On the north side they end in arch-supports which are bonded into the mud brick wall to the depth of 30 cm.<sup>(1)</sup>

An entrance 3.8 m. wide [Fig. 53], leads to the central aisle which is wider than the rest, measuring exactly the same as those at the Haram, 7.30 m. for the central one and 6.20 for the rest.

#### The Sahn (The Courtyard)

In the middle there is to be found a rectangular sahn which measures 155.80 m.<sup>(2)</sup> by 103.93 m.<sup>(3)</sup> and is surrounded by aisles on four sides [Fig. 54].

The floor of the sahn was paved with polished bricks, each brick measuring 32 x 32 x 4 cm.<sup>(4)</sup>

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1. See Fransis and 'Alī, op.cit., p.66,; Creswell in E.M.A. II, p.279, quoted most of the statement presented by the Department of Antiquities in Iraq, but he mentions that the arches-support bonded into the mud brick wall to a depth of 30 cm.
  2. Creswell, E.M.A., II, p.278 mentions that the east side, 155.88 m., the west, 155.73; average 155.80 m., Herzfeld Archäologische Reise, I, p.71, gives the measurements as 160.75 m.; Fransis and 'Alī, op.cit., p.63 mention the measurement as 155.70m.
  3. Creswell, E.M.A., II, p.278, mentions that the north side 103.89 m. south, 103.98; average 103.93; Herzfeld, Archäologische Reise, I, p.71, gives the measurement as 104.25 m.; Fransis and 'Alī, op.cit., p.63, mention the measurement as 104.60 m.
  4. Fransis and 'Alī, op.cit., p.69.

The upper part of the piers which formed the four facades of the sahn are decorated with a recessed panel [Fig. 55 a,b]. Each one contains three recessed pipes, the central one having a round bottom, and being surrounded by a rectangular frame [Fig. 56], measuring 3.15 m. long, 1.70 m. width, these recessed panels seem to be placed carefully at the same height and it seems that they were originally coated with a gypsum covering [Fig. 57].

The arches are all constructed of two rings of square bricks, those of the inner ring being set face outwards and those of the outer ring edgewise, exactly as in the Gate of Riqqa at Baghdad, except that each ring is only a brick and a half instead of two bricks thick, and the springing of the outer ring is sometimes at a higher level than that of the inner. The inner ring has fallen in every case, but its depth can be measured by the setting back of the outer ring from the face of the pier and, in a great number of cases, enough remains of the inner ring for the face of the brick to be observed. Here and there, where a fragment has been preserved at the springing we can see that it is slightly set forward. In form, also, these arches are of the four-centred Raqqa type, as may be observed from the outline of the outer ring. <sup>(1)</sup>

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1. E.M.A., II, p.279.

### The Ceiling:

The remains of the arches, the construction at the top of them and the absence of any curvature where the arches start does not suggest that the ceiling was bonded by bricks. At 50 cm. above the top of the arches, holes were noticed at several places in the sanctuary (ḥaram) aisles at one level. The distances between each two holes varied between 60 and 70 cms. and their diameters between 20-25 cms. The conclusion to be drawn from the existence of these holes is that the ceiling was supported on wooden beams, but no traces of these timbers were found, and we have no indications as to the sort of material placed on top of them, e.g. reeds and mat.<sup>(1)</sup>

Herzfeld suggests that the ceiling was evenly covered with palm-beams, laid over the pillars, and that a covering of mats was laid over this, with a thick coat of clay above.<sup>(2)</sup>

But the flat ceiling was not satisfactory in rainy weather as in Iraq, for it gives no help to the water to flow away.

So Herzfeld mentions that the flat rooves must have had a slight incline, so that the water could run off.<sup>(3)</sup>

The question arises as to why the transept next to the sanctuary (ḥaram), running parallel with the southern walls, was

1. Fransis and 'Alī, op.cit., p.68.

2. Archäologische Reise, I, p.75.

3. Archäologische Reise, I, p.75.

wider than the rest of the aisles (10.6 m.). Previously it was thought that this space was roofless, and was left open to the sky.<sup>(1)</sup> But Herzfeld's excavations of 1912-13,<sup>(2)</sup> indicate that the row of the bases dividing the transept into two divisions, each 4.38 m. wide, were intended for pillars which supported a ceiling above them.

### The Mihrāb

The location of the Mihrāb was not clear earlier this century.

Miss Bell saw in 1909 in the centre of the south wall a fragment of burnt brick which she thought might be the curve of a mihrāb, but she also suggests that it might be a door leading into a small building or vestibule.<sup>(3)</sup>

Herzfeld saw the same gap in the middle axis of the southern wall, and recognized it as being only the main doorway of this mosque.<sup>(4)</sup> This confusion arose probably because of the extraordinary wide transept, which was not familiar in the structure of the Islamic mosques. The difficulty was noticed by Miss Bell, that if this transept was open to the sky it was unlikely that the mihrāb could

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1. Bell, Amurath to Amurath, p.245.

2. Mitteilung., p.204.

3. Amurath to Amurath, p.245.

4. Archäologische Reise, I, p.72.

have been placed in it; she should have placed a door at the centre of the south wall as at Sāmarrā. (1)

It seems that the same difficulty faced Herzfeld; he appeared rather confused about the position of the mihrāb, but he also stated that the problem could probably be solved by digging. (2)

Subsequent excavations have established that the mihrāb was placed in the middle of the southern wall; indeed it still projects outside the southern wall by 2.44 m. The remains of the construction shows the existence of two mihrābs [Fig. 58] built at different periods, but it is very difficult to suggest the exact date. Probably the first one was constructed at the same time that the mosque was built. Afterwards it was found necessary to reduce the size and this was possibly because of the space needed for the minbar which occupied part of the place of the first mihrāb. (3) The remains of the first mihrāb stand to a height of 2.45 m. and that of the second to 1.60 m. [Fig. 59], so that they have a difference of 85 cms. in height. Had it not been for this it would have

1. Amurath to Amurath, p.245.

2. Archäologische Reise, I, p.72; however Herzfeld was satisfied that the mihrāb was in existence in the middle of the south wall, for Miss Bell points out, Palace and Mosque at Ukhaïdir, p.155, that Dr. Herzfeld informs her that he has by excavation ascertained the existence of a mihrāb in the centre of the Qibla wall where she had placed a door.

3. Fransīs and 'Alī, op.cit., pp.67f.

been very difficult to suggest that the mihrāb was built in two stages.<sup>(1)</sup>

The opening of the mihrāb is 5·74 m. wide at the sides forming a round and concave shape [Fig. 60] which narrows down towards the bottom of the mihrāb where the opening is 1·98 m. and its depth is 1 m. The total depth of the mihrāb from the inner face of the mosque wall to the bottom of the mihrāb, is 3·12 m. The second mihrāb has an opening 3·60 m. wide and it also narrows inwards until it becomes 1·60 m. wide, and the depth of the hollow is 0·71 m. and if we consider depth of the sides, the total will be 1·90 m.<sup>(2)</sup>

#### The Minaret:

The minaret of Abū Dulaf mosque is similar to that of the Sāmarrā; it was described by Ross as a Malwīya in miniature.<sup>(3)</sup> Although its summit had fallen,<sup>(4)</sup> [Fig. 61] Viollet has seen this minaret from some distance on his way to this mosque.<sup>(5)</sup>

It lies on the axis diametrically opposed to the frontal structure to the north, about 9·37 m. from the front of the

1. Ibid., p.68.

2. Ibid., p.68.

3. J.R.G.S., XI, p.129.

4. Rivoira points out, Moslem Architecture, p.147, that in 1918 the upper part of the minaret has fallen.

5. D.P.M., p.12.



north wall,<sup>(1)</sup> [See Fig. 46] in the northern Ziyāda. Its base is almost square with sides of 10.63 m. to the north and south, and 10.83 m. in the east and west;<sup>(2)</sup> its height measured from the floor is 2.70 m.<sup>(3)</sup> Each face of this base is decorated with a row of thirteen niches [Fig. 62], except for the southern face which has 10 recessed niches only, because the entrance of the staircase occupied a space of three niches, each niche forming a double-recessed frame; each niche is 1.55 m. high.

The southern side of the base is different to the other three in that it has an entrance leading up to a staircase 1.15 m. wide [Fig. 63]. It is followed by 4 steps on the inner side, then turning towards the helical part [Fig. 64] to the left at the top of the entrance there are remains of a brick and mortar

1. Figure mentioned above is according to my measurement. Herzfeld Archäologische Reise, I, p.72 records the figure as 9.50; Creswell, E.M.A., II, p.281, S.A.E.M.A., p.285, E.I./2, I, art. "Architecture", p.621 gives the measurement as 9.60 m.; Francis and Ali, op.cit., p.69, refer to the measurement as 9.50; Muhammad, op.cit., p.161 mentions the figure 6.60.
2. Figures mentioned above are according to my measurement, Herzfeld, Archäologische Reise, I, p.72, gives the measurement as a square each side measures 10.90; Rivoira, op.cit., p.147, presents the measurement as 12.50 x 10.80 m.; Creswell, in E.M.A., II, p.281; E.I./2, I, art. "Architecture", p.621; S.A.E.M.A., p.285, refers to the figure as 11.20 square; Francis and Ali, op.cit., p.69, give the measurement at 10.87 m. in the north and south, 10.60 m. in the west and east; Muhammad, op.cit., p.161, records the figure 10.60m. in the north and south, 10.90 m. on the east and west.
3. Francis and Ali, op.cit., p.69; Creswell in E.M.A., II, p.281, S.A.E.M.A., p.285, records the height as 2.50; De Beylie, op.cit., p.123, and Fig. 87, refers to the measurement as 2.50 m.

construction three metres long joining to the helical part [Fig. 65]; this construction probably extended on both sides of the entrance to fill the gap which existed between the end pillars of the aisle and the minaret.<sup>(1)</sup>

Since no trace of any supplementary construction could be seen on the opposite side of this entrance, it is difficult to suggest that the remains were part of an arch or vault to cover the entrance, for such a structure could not be carried by supports on one side only; and furthermore there would be no need to cover this entrance.

It seems possible that an aisle was added to the northern part of the mosque to face the increasing number of worshippers, and this was confirmed by the existence of the two pillars [See Figs. 63, 65] attached to the base of the minaret. This aisle must have joined the middle entrance of the northern wall to the base of the minaret.

Further confirmation has been provided by the latest excavation; on the clearance of the debris between the minaret and the mosque remains of pillars were found, the pillars forming an aisle 5.13 m. wide and extending from the northern wall to the base of the minaret. That the Ziyada was added to the mosque after the completion of the minaret, is proved by

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1. Fransis and 'Alī, op.cit., p.69.

the fact that these pillars were weaker in strength than the pillars of the mosque and the walls were not interlocked with the walls of the mosque.<sup>(1)</sup>

The helical body of the minaret rising to about 16.20 m. above the base and the total height from the ground to the demolished part of the top is about 19.0 m.<sup>(2)</sup>

Before the restoration the helical ramps completed three revolutions in an anti-clockwise direction, the fourth turn, together with the summit, was added to the minaret in a reconstruction carried out by the Iraqi archaeologists [See Figs. 61, 66].

#### Ziyadas (The additions):

The previous excavations carried out by Herzfeld, show that the proper mosque including the minaret was surrounded on the east, north and west sides by an open space 108 paces wide and this area was itself surrounded by halls 42 paces deep, [Fig. 67] built of mud brick and only approximately traceable in plan. On the middle axis to the mosque a road, only 12 paces wide, runs close to the frontal portico from west to east, it seems to be founded by a low mound to the south. Beyond this mound lies a flat area at a rather lower level,

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1. Ibid., pp.69f.

2. Ibid., p.69.

perhaps belonging to the road. This road seems to run in a straight line to somewhere near the river. So the whole layout of the mosque encloses an area of some 380 x 380 m.<sup>(1)</sup>

The later excavation of the Department of Antiquities in Iraq in the process of clearing the debris between the minaret and the mosque brought to light the remains of pillar bases.

These pillars formed an aisle 5.13 m. wide and extended from the northern wall to the base of the minaret. Other sides of the mosque were cleared and other pillar bases were found, surrounding these sides of the mosque. On the northern side these pillars were 10.8 m. away but at their junction with the wall of the yard surrounding the minaret the distance dropped to 9.45 m. while on the eastern and western sides, these pillars extended as far as the fifth gate, and they were 10.3 m. away from the two walls. That these additions were added to the mosque after its completion is indicated by the fact that these pillars were weaker in strength than the pillars of the mosque and the wall and were not interlocked with the walls of the mosque. Some pillars were found to be parallel to the base of the minaret and attached to the niches looking over the sahn.

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1. Herzfeld, Archäologische Reise, I, p.73, but later in 1912-13, where Herzfeld and Sarre carried out the excavations in this mosque, they gave another measurement, that the dimensions of the whole complex were found to be 350 x 362 m. See Herzfeld, Mitteilung, p.204.

This suggests the conclusion that the mosque became overcrowded with worshippers so that some expansion was needed. The events in the Ja'fariya town which led the people to leave the town lessened the importance of the Abū Dulaf mosque, so that the extension was not required any longer and it was left unfinished.

The clearing of some of the debris uncovered some incompletely constructed pillars.

The cross-section of the pillars on the eastern and western sides were 1.6 x 0.82 m. in dimension. These pillars were in two rows and were interrupted at each gate by aisles with ceilings constructed in a contrary direction to the ceilings of the outer aisles. Each side of these aisles has three pillars, one being attached to the wall, the middle is T-shaped and the second is L-shaped. The width of the aisles before the entrance is 5.2 m. while the rest are 4.35 m. wide. The pillars on the northern side have 2.15 x 1 m. cross-sectional area and they form two aisles extending northwards with a width of about 2.80 m.<sup>(1)</sup>

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1. Fransis and 'Alī, op.cit., pp.69f.

## G - HOW LONG SĀMARRĀ WAS INHABITED?

This was the situation in Sāmarrā at the end of al-Mutawakkil's reign; five other Califs made it their capital, namely: al-Muntaṣir (247-248 A.H./861-862 A.D.), al-Musta'in (248-252 A.H./862-866 A.D.), al-Mu'tazz (252-255 A.H./866-868 A.D.), al-Muhtadī (255-256 A.H./<sup>868-870</sup>868-269 A.D.), and al-Mu'tamid (256-279 A.H./869-892 A.D.)

In addition to the architectural works of both al-Mu'taṣim and al-Mutawakkil, quite a few palaces were erected to accommodate the various Califs and princes and their followers.

It should be pointed out that Sāmarrā was one of the strangest capitals ever to have been constructed. This strangeness lies in the fact that it was built originally to accommodate the Turkish bodyguard of the Calif al-Mu'taṣim and to serve as the capital of the 'Abbāsīd Empire when the Caliphate moved from Baghdād in 220 A.H./835 A.D.

As we have seen, it was formerly no more than a bare tract without habitation except for a Christian monastery but by 247 A.H./861 A.D. the buildings and streets already extended for a distance of about 34 Km. starting from a point 8 Km. to the south of the present town and ending some 26 Km. to the north. Sāmarrā remained the capital of the 'Abbāsīd Empire during the rule of al-Mu'taṣim and al-Wathīq, but when al-Mutawakkil came to the throne he built, at the end of his reign for himself and

his followers the town of al-Mutawakkiliya, where, as Yā'qūt states, the people and inhabitants followed him leaving Sāmarrā practically abandoned. (1)

When al-Mutawakkil was murdered in 247 A.H. and his son al-Muntaṣir succeeded him, Ya'qūbī states that he moved back to Sāmarrā and ordered all the population to follow him and building material to reconstruct Sāmarrā was obtained, and the palaces of al-Mutawakkiliya and its houses, dwellings, and markets fell rapidly into ruin. The site lay waste totally uninhabited, and the houses were left desolate as though they had never been inhabited. (2)

Sāmarrā was again adopted as a seat of the 'Abbāsid Caliphate from 247 A.H. /861 A.D. to 279 A.H./ 892 A.D. during the reign of five Califs namely: al-Muntaṣir, al-Musta'in, al-Mu'tazz, al-Muhtādī and al-Mu'tamid. But the last of them left Sāmarrā and returned to take up his residence in the older capital (Baghdād), six months before his death in 279 A.H./ 892 A.D.

Yā'qūt relates that al-Mu'taḍid, who succeeded al-Mu'tamid, lived partly in Sāmarrā, but he finally abandoned it completely (probably in 280 A.H./893 A.D.) and it therefore became a complete ruin. (3)

1. Mu'jam, II, p.87.

2. Buldān, p.32; see also Mu'jam, IV, p.413.

3. Mu'jam, III, p.19.



Thus the 'Abbāsid Caliphate had its seat at Sāmarrā for about fifty-eight years.<sup>(1)</sup> This period was interrupted in (251 A.H./865 A.D.) by the episode of the flight to Baghdād of the Calif al-Musta'in who made an unsuccessful attempt to escape from the tyranny of the Turkish guard.<sup>(2)</sup>

After the departure of al-Mu'tamid and al-Mu'taḍid to Baghdād, the historical evidence shows that Sāmarrā was entirely abandoned.

However, a great many historical texts deal with the desertion of Sāmarrā and quite a number of poems were composed describing the surprisingly sudden rise and decline of this great capital.<sup>(3)</sup>

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1. Ya'qūbī points out in Buldān, p.43, that the total period was 55 years.
  2. Le strange, Baghdād during the 'Abbāsid Caliphate, p.311.
  3. See Mu'jam, III, pp.19f and IV, p.413; Maqdisī, p.122.

CHAPTER V

THE ARCHITECTURAL ORIGINS OF THE MALWĪYA AND ITS  
RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MINARET OF IBN ṬULŪN

## A - THE ARCHITECTURAL ORIGINS OF THE MALWĪYA

The spiral of the minaret and the helicoidal staircase in the Great Mosque and at Abū Dulaf have received special attention from recent historians and archaeologists.

The theories that have been put forward to explain the form show that they may be divided into two groups. Those of the first suggest that the architectural form of the Malwīya was derived from the ancient Ziggurat of the Assyrians and Babylonians.

This earliest support for this theory, it would seem, was given by Thielman in 1875.<sup>(1)</sup> In his description of the Malwīya, he says: "It is a tower of apparently considerable antiquity, the shape of which is an imitation of the ancient tower of Babel."<sup>(2)</sup> This suggestion served as a basis for the explanation offered by many subsequent writers, notably, de Beylie, Gottheil, Miss Bell, Rivoira, Pigjoan, Kühnel, Terrasse and Creswell.<sup>(3)</sup>

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1. Lycklama Nijeholt in Voyage en Russie and Caucase et en Perse, III, p.380, wrote in 1874 that the Malwīya resembles the tower of Piza, but he gave no suggestion or comparison.
  2. Streifzüge im Kaukasus, p.355; English transl., Journey in the Caucasus, Persia and Turkey in Asia, II, p.140.
  3. Beylie, Prome et Sāmarrā, p.115, refers to Chaldean Ziggurates; Gottheil, The Origin and History of the Minaret, J.A.O.S., xxx, p.145, refers to the Babylonian Ziggurat, Miss Bell, Amurath to Amurath, p.246, refers to the temple Pyramids of Assyria and Babylonia; Rivoira, Moslem Architecture, p.147; Pigoan, History of Art, II, p.220, refers to the stage-towers of Assyria and Babylonia. Kühnel, Die Kunst des Islam, English transl. by K. Watson Islamic Art and Architecture, p.51 refers to the Babylonian stepped tower (Ziggurat) and to the Chinese buildings of the Tang period; Terrasse, L'Art hispano mauresque, p.30, refers to the Babylonian Ziggurats; Creswell, E.M.A., II, p.264; S.A.E.M.A., p.280, refers to the tower of Babel.

The second group of writers however believe that the Malwiya was derived from the Tīrbal of Gūr near Fīrūzābād [Fig. 68],<sup>(1)</sup>

A careful study of the Babylonian and Assyrian Ziggurats and of that discovered at Fīrūzābād shows that the suggestion adduced by most of these authorities are open to question, if only because it is difficult to believe that the minarets of Sāmarrā and Abū Dulaf could be derived directly from the Ziggurats. These are usually built on a rectangular or square plan, with free standing staircase rising up to the summit on the south or the south-east side, whereas the minarets are circular with staircase rising spirally around them.

Archaeological excavations have brought to light several Mesopotamian and Persian Ziggurats, such as the Ziggurat of Agargūr,<sup>(2)</sup> Khorsābād,<sup>(3)</sup> Babylon and the tower of Gūr.<sup>(4)</sup>

These four Ziggurats have been chosen to illustrate the idea advanced here, because they are the best known and represent different areas as well as different periods.

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1. This was firstly suggested by Herzfeld, Sāmarrā, pp.28-30, also his Archäologische Reise, I, p.77, and his Erster, p.12; followed by Thiersch, Pharos, pp.112 and 14; Bulley Ancient and Medieval Art, p.272, refers to the influence of the Assyrian and Persian temples; Marcais, Manuel d'Art Musulman, I, Architecture, I, p.39, refers to the Persian Ziggurat, Muhammad, op.cit., p.171.
  2. Parrot, Sumer, p.314; Champdor, Babylon, p.127.
  3. Place, Ninive, I, p.137f.
  4. Flandin and Coste, Voyage en Perse, Text, p.39; Dieulafoy, L'Art antique de la Perse, IV, pp.79-84.

I shall give below a summary of the general descriptions presented by historians and archaeologists, without extending it to enquire into the aims and purposes for which they were built.<sup>(1)</sup>

The Ziggurat of Agargūf had a triple stairway which still survives overlooking the ruins,<sup>(2)</sup> like a huge heraldic sign, rising to a height of 187 feet above the level of the plain.<sup>(3)</sup> That of Khorsābād, still with the remains of three storeys intact and visible, was excavated by Place who found it formed a perfect square of 43·10 m. a side. At the south corner was the commencement of a gentle staircase, each step of which was 2 m. wide, 80 cm. deep and 5 cm. high, which continued over the whole length of one side, turned the corner and, always ascending, passed all the corners of the tower in succession until the excavators found themselves back at their point of departure, but 6·10 m. higher. The faces of the tower were decorated with a series of salients and recesses, and on the outer edge of the staircase there were traces of a parapet, which at two points was sufficiently well preserved to enable the form of its crenellations to be recognized. The staircase continued round

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1. For the purposes of the Ziggurats, see in detail, Saggs, The Greater that was Babylon, pp.33 and 355f; Parrot, op.cit., p.98; Hooke, Babylonian and Assyrian religion, p.90.
  2. Parrot, op.cit., p.314.
  3. Champdor, op.cit., p.127.

the tower in an anti-clockwise direction as at Sāmarrā. These storeys each 6.10 m. in height, were planned to exist together with the remains of a fourth, the side of each storey being 4 m. less than the one below, on account of the set-back of 2 m. caused by the staircase. (1)

It seems unlikely from this description, that the Ziggurat of Agargūf was used as a model of the Malwīya for there is no similarity to be seen.

The second Ziggurat at Khorsābād, seems the only one that may have been of the Sāmarrā type, discovered in Iraq as Place expresses. (2) Place's reconstruction has, however, not been accepted, being criticised notably by Koldwey, (3) who thought that Place had allowed his imagination to run away with him. No similar building has been found to support his judgment. Place expressly says, as Creswell points out, that he expected to find a circular building. (4)

The third example is the tower of Babel called Etemen-an-Ki, (i.e. house of the foundation of heaven and earth). (5)

1. Place, Ninive, I, pp.137-48, the description mentioned above is quoted from Creswell, E.M.A., II, p.262.
2. Place, op.cit., I, pp.137-48.
3. Die Temple Von Babylon, p.65; Dombart, art. "Der Babylonische Turm", Alt.O., XXIX, Taf. 1-4.
4. E.M.A., II, p.262.
5. Parrot, Nineveh and Babylon, p.228; Champdor, op.cit., p.127.

It was the best known Ziggurat, and was in all probability built in ancient Mesopotamia in the third millenium B.C.<sup>(1)</sup> The story of the tower of Babel mentioned in the book of Genesis, evidently relates to the Ziggurat of Babylon.<sup>(2)</sup>

Babylon suffered a lot from Persian raids, Cyrus capturing the city twice in 538 and 525 B.C.<sup>(3)</sup> There is no indication to show that the tower of Babel was damaged at that time. But later under Darius III, the Persians, with the growing fanaticism of their Zoroastrian religion destroyed a good many temples in Babylon and probably also the great tower.<sup>(4)</sup>

The tower, as it seems, became a ruin at the hands of Xerxes before the rest of the city fell into decay,<sup>(5)</sup> for in the year (483 B.C.) Charnach-irba, King of Babylon, rebelled there, so the Persian army led by Xerxes surrounded the city and captured it.<sup>(6)</sup>

From the fact mentioned above, it appears that the tower of Bābel was not in good condition by the time that Herodotus (458 B.C.) visited it. Anyway, the description given by this famous historian shows that the tower had a spiral staircase on

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1. Champdor, op.cit., p.127.

2. Bible XI, 1-9.

3. Short, A History of Religious Architecture, p.26,

4. Schneider, Babylon is everywhere, p.79.

5. Razī, Ta'rikhe Kāmile Iran, p.28.

6. Champdor, op.cit., p.127.



the outside. He states:

"In the middle of the precinct there was a tower of solid masonry, a furlong in length and breadth, upon which was raised a second tower, and on that a third, and so on up to eight. The ascent to the top is on the outside by a path which winds round all the tower. When one is about half-way up, one finds a resting-place and seats, where persons are wont to sit some time on their way to the summit. On the topmost tower there was a spacious temple, and inside the temple stood a couch of unusual size, richly adorned, with a golden table by its side."<sup>(1)</sup>

Herodotus' statement observed the bad condition of the tower but this was clearly indicated in 331, B.C. (i.e. 127 years later) when Alexander the Great visited Babylon and found it a heap of rubble.<sup>(2)</sup> It would seem that the account adduced by the famous historian was hardly precise, for it is difficult to believe that "a tower of solid masonry" as Herodotus called it, changed after 127 years to a heap of rubble. In the year 331 B.C. it was suggested that 20,000 Macedonian soldiers would be required to clear up the ruins but the work was never started.<sup>(3)</sup>

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1. History of Herodotus, I, p.255.

2. Schneider, op.cit., p.79.

3. Al-Amin, B.C.A.B.U., II, 1966, p.220.

The fame of this tower might have attracted Herodotus and also the other travellers, as Champdor records, they explored the neighbourhood and described in fanciful detail the phenomenal "Tower of Bābel" which they were convinced they had seen.<sup>(1)</sup>

The conclusion put forward above may be levelled at the description of the Esagila tablet, which was found by G. Smith on his last Journey.<sup>(2)</sup> This tablet gives, as Smith says, a remarkable account of the temple of Belus at Babylon.<sup>(3)</sup> It was written in 229 B.C. and shows that this temple had seven stages, the seventh one forming the sanctuary of the god Bel. Its whole height above the foundation was 15 gar (300 feet), exactly equal to the length of the base.<sup>(4)</sup> These equal measurements remind us of those of the Pyramids.

Gottheil points out that the tower was in use under the Seleucid Kings up to 296 B.C.<sup>(5)</sup> If this is so, the tower in its original form would by now have been useless unless some

1. This tablet was hurriedly transcribed by G. Smith on his journey to Nineveh from which he was destined never to return and his account of it remained our only source of information on the subject until V. Scheil discovered the text in private possession. It is now being fully edited by V. Scheil and M. Dieulafoy under the title "Esagil ou le temple de Bēl-Marduk a Babylone, in the *Memories de l'Academie des Inscription et-Belles-Lettres*, Paris 1913" see Koldewey, The Excavations at Babylon, p.327.
2. Koldewey, op.cit., 192 f.
3. *Ibid.*, pp.192 f.
4. See Koldewey, op.cit., pp.192 f.
5. Op.cit., p.140.

reconstruction had been carried out.

I place special emphasis on this tower in order to prove that the Ziggurat of Bābel, which according to recent authorities served as the model of the Minaret of Sāmarrā, was not well preserved in the ninth century when the Malwīya was built.

Creswell favours the idea that the Malwīya followed the model of the Ziggurat of Babylon, and supports his theory by citing two short descriptions which were written by Harpocraton and Benjamin of Tudela.<sup>(1)</sup> Harpocraton of Alexandria describes the tower of Babylon as follows: "There were 365 steps leading up to a shrine on its summit."<sup>(2)</sup> This indicates that nothing had been left of the Ziggurat except the steps, whose existence was probably indicated only by traces.

The second description was made by Benjamin of Tudela in the second half of the twelfth century. He says: "The length of its foundation is about two miles, the breadth of the tower is about forty cubits, and the length there of two hundred cubits. At every ten cubits distance there are slopes which go round the tower by which one can ascend to the top."<sup>(3)</sup> The measurements given by Benjamin of Tudela do

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1. E.M.A., II, pp.263f.

2. The phrase mentioned above quoted from Creswell, E.M.A., II, p.264.

3. The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela, Adler's translation, J.Q.B., XVII, p.43.

not appear to be exact simply because we know from Herodotus' statement and from information in the Esagila tablet that the base (or the first stage) of the tower forms a square in shape, while it forms, according to Benjamin's statement, a rectangle. This would be unusual, for most of the Ziggurats have square bases. From this fact we may believe that Benjamin was describing just what was no more than a mound with some traces of slopes around it. It would thus seem that the stage Ziggurats could not be seen at the time that the Malwiya was built. They were probably hidden under heaps of dust and debris, until the present centuries when archaeological excavations have brought some of them to light.

If any of the Mesopotamian Ziggurats were completely visible at that time, the Muslims travellers would surely have mentioned them. Moreover, Ḥamad-allāh Mustawfī (1340 A.D.) states that: "No minaret after this fashion (Malwiya) was ever built by any one before his (al-Mutawakkil) time."<sup>(1)</sup>

The other group, on the other hand, suggests that the Malwiya form was derived indirectly from the Ṭirbāl of Gūr near Firūzābād, this suggestion was first put forward by Herzfeld.<sup>(2)</sup>

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1. Nuzhat al-Qulūb, p.49.

2. For details see his books, Sāmarrā, pp.28-30; and Archäologische Reise, I, p.77.

Dieulafoy believes that the ʾṬirbāl of Gūr was the descendent of the old Ziggurats to being similar to the Ziggurat of Khorsābād, and he also says that the later Ziggurat was the model for the ʾṬirbāl of Gūr.<sup>(1)</sup>

Herzfeld supports Dieulafoy's point of view, stating that he is quite correct.<sup>(2)</sup> Therefore he adduces firstly a theory that the Malwiya of Sāmarrā followed the Tower of Gūr, and he considers that the Malwiya was really a Ziggurat, the Malwiya of Sāmarrā representing the last stage in the evolution of the Babylonian Ziggurat; after Sāmarrā the line of development became extinct.<sup>(3)</sup>

The tower of Gūr was described by Flandin and Coste in 1843 as an enormous mass of about 33 m. high, in the shape of a quadrangle with a large square base of 9 m. each side. Nothing protrudes from its four sides, nor does anything indicate openings of any sort giving access to the interior; the building now consists of little more than its foundation stones. In the middle of the cracks, holes and other things produced here and there by age, one can distinguish traces going in one continuous direction. These start low down and rise progressively following the same crooked pattern and go around

1. Op.cit., IV, p.79.

2. Sāmarrā, p.26.

3. Ibid., pp.35f.

the four sides. Flandin suggests that they may mark an inclined plane or a staircase which would at another turn lead to the top where, as he points out, there was a sanctuary.<sup>(1)</sup>

About forty years later Dieulafoy investigated the tower and described it as a rectangular heap about 28 m. high, with traces of a staircase running round all four faces forming a square, each stage receding from the preceding one by a space equal to  $1/10$  of the base.<sup>(2)</sup>

From the result of this investigation Dieulafoy produced the reconstruction shown in [Fig. 68]. Dieulafoy's reconstruction stood from 1884 without any rejection till 1924, when Herzfeld visited the Tower of Gūr. He then carried out some archaeological investigations which led him to reject the former reconstruction, suggesting that the square shaft was merely the case of a tower with vaulted staircase, the outside walls of which have disappeared entirely, and only a few traces of the ramp and the vaults were left.<sup>(3)</sup>

Anyhow, Dieulafoy's reconstruction and Herzfeld's criticism do not change the fact that this tower closely resembled the ancient Mesopotamian and Persian Ziggurats.

1. Op.cit., Text, p.39.

2. Dieulafoy, op.cit., IV, pp.79-85.

3. Art. 'Reisebericht', Z.D.M.G., N.F., 5, pp.254f. The statement mentioned above quoted from Muḥammad, op.cit., p.170.

Herzfeld himself attempted to prove that the Ziggurat of Khorsābād in Iraq was the model of the tower of Gūr, while the latter served as the model of the Malwīya.<sup>(1)</sup>

It appears that Herzfeld, and others, who have followed his suggestion, were unsuccessful in their attempt to prove that the Malwīya derived indirectly from the Tīrbāl of Gūr, for the example which was presented by them was not correctly chosen. This fact was elucidated in a statement written by al-Iṣṭakhrī (340 A.H./951 A.D.)

It must be noted here that neither Herzfeld nor those who have accepted his ideas have mentioned this report; no reasons have been given for this neglect. However, al-Iṣṭakhrī describes the foundation of Gūr town, the tower and what was left from it. He states: "Gūr was built by Ardashīr, in area it was as big as Iṣṭakhr, Sabūr and Dārābgird. It was surrounded by a trench and a clay wall with four gates. In the centre of the town there existed a building known as al-Tīrbāl. This building was founded by Ardashīr. It was said that it was so high that it was possible for a person at the top to see the whole town and the adjoining countryside. A Fire-House was built at the top of the building and was supplied by water from a mountain next to this building. The water was drained through

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1. Sāmarrā, pp.26f.



another course. The whole building was constructed of bricks and mortar but not much has been left of it for the people used up most of the building material."<sup>(1)</sup>

The value of this statement lies in the fact that it presents important information about the tower in the time of the author, but no information has been given about when the tower lost its form and became a ruin. Probably this had happened long ago before the time of al-Iṣṭakhrī. This fact shows that the Ṭirbāl of Gūr was not well preserved at the time that the Malwīya was constructed.

It should be noted that there was not much similarity between the Malwīya and this tower; indeed the only similarity that could be easily admitted is the proportion of the base to the height. Whereas an important difference may be observed, namely, the shape of the stages and their number, apart from this, so far, no solution has yet been established concerning the form of the staircase. There is no agreement between Dieulafoy and Herzfeld. However, advanced archaeological studies may reveal the original form and show whether the staircase ran round all the faces as Dieulafoy reports,<sup>(2)</sup> or was covered by rising tunnel-vault as Herzfeld observed.<sup>(3)</sup>

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1. Masālik al-Mamālik, p.124.

2. Op.cit., IV, pp.79-84.

3. Creswell points out in E.M.A., II, p.263 that Herzfeld told him that he was convinced that the staircase of this tower was covered by rising tunnel-vault, for traces of its springing were still visible in many places.

Turkish influence on 'Abbāsīd architecture was not as intense as their influence in the political affairs. They were mountain-men when they were collected as slaves, changing from hand to hand. Afterwards in Mu'taṣim's Califate they got control over the empire, the political and the military affairs attracted them more than anything else.

However, we may conclude from some of the historical text, that if the Malwīya was effectively influenced from elsewhere, it would seem that inspiration might have come from Syria or from Egypt where a great number of engineers and craftsmen had been called to build Sāmarrā at Mu'taṣim's time. Ya'qūbī makes this point clearly.<sup>(1)</sup>

Ya'qūbī also states that Mu'taṣim "made people come from every country who were able to practise a craft or any art connected with agriculture, sowing, date growing, planting trees or vines, hydraulic engineering, measuring water, bringing it up to the surface, and discovering its sources in the ground. From Egypt he had people brought who could make papyrus and other things, from Baṣra he had people brought who could make glass, pottery and matting. From Kūfa, people who could make pottery and who could make paint of various kinds, and from the rest of the province people of every kind of art and industry."<sup>(2)</sup>

Though Ya'qūbī does not mention that engineers and craftsmen

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1. See Buldān, p.32.

2. Ibid., p.39.

were bought in al-Mutawakkil's time, he just says that Mutawakkil ordered the astronomer Muḥammad ibn Mūsā and those architects who waited on him to select a site.<sup>(1)</sup> But mostly he had followed Mu'taṣim, for without doubt a greater quantity of architectural works had been done in his time than in Mu'taṣim's reign.

The Turkish troops who became the main power in the 'Abbāsid army in both Mu'taṣim's and Mutawakkil's reign had accumulated from several places of the Islamic Empire, where their number was increased in the society by means of purchase, captivity and as a payment of Kharaj with slaves.

Some of the Turkish troops in Sāmarrā were originally from Samarqand. Ya'qūbī records clearly that Ja'far al-Khushakī told him the following: al-Mu'taṣim used to send me, in the reign of al-Ma'mun to Nūh ibn Asad at Samarqand to purchase Turks, and each year I would bring him a number, so that during the reign of al-Ma'mūn he accumulated upwards of 3,000 youths.<sup>(2)</sup> Ya'qūbī adds that when al-Mu'taṣim succeeded to the Caliphate he maintained his search for them, buying such as were slaves of people at Baghdad.<sup>(3)</sup>

If the suggestion that the Malwīya idea was copied from the tower of Gūr, it is interesting to speculate whether it might have been brought to Iraq by Turkish people passing through

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1. Ibid., p.41.

2. Ibid., p.29.

3. Ibid., p.29f.

Persia.<sup>(1)</sup>

It would be unlikely that the Turkish people followed any specific road in their journey across Persia, because as Maqdisī states: at that time very many routes existed in the Persia area,<sup>(2)</sup> and because, Gūr was situated in the province of Fārs<sup>(3)</sup> in the south west Persia to the east of the Persian Gulf [Fig. 69]. Gūr was built by Ardashīr who named it Ardashīr Khūrā.<sup>(4)</sup> Later the Arabs called it Gūr<sup>(5)</sup> after their conquest of Persia, afterwards Aḡud-ad-Dawlah changed its name to Fīrūzābād.<sup>(6)</sup>

Fīrūzābād as it is shown in the map seems far away from the roads which connected the original Turkish homeland with Persia and Iraq. However, Turkish people who came to Iraq from various places would most likely have followed the roads that existed previously in north or central Persia.

It thus appears that the suggestion that the influence of the Babylonian Ziggurats in Persia was carried to Sāmarrā in the

1. Muḥammad, op.cit., p.171.

2. Aḡsan at-Taḡāsīm, p.10.

3. Ibn Khurradadhbih, al-masalik wa'l-mamālik, p.47; Ibn Ḥawqal, al-Masalik wa'l-mamālik, p.179; Maqdisī, op.cit., p.441; al-Iṣṭakhrī, masalik al-mamālik, p.97; ibn al-Faḡīh, al-Buldān, p.204; Mu'jam, II, p.146.

4. Ibn Ḥawqal, op.cit., p.179; al-Iṣṭakhrī, op.cit., p.97; ibn al-Faḡīh, op.cit., p.198.

5. Ibn Ḥawqal, op.cit., p.179; ibn al-Faḡīh, op.cit., p.198.

6. Mu'jam, II, p.146.

ninth century by the Turkish people, is not confirmed totally by the architectural features and by historical evidence as well.

So there are no examples of Babylonian Ziggurats or Persian Fire-House still preserved to suggest that the builder of the Malwiya had been effected by their style or plan.

Therefore, I would point out with some reservation that this type of Minaret never existed at an earlier date in Iraq or Persia, but suggest rather that it was invented for the first time at Sāmarrā in 'Abbāsid times.

#### B - THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE MINARETS OF SĀMARRĀ AND THE MINARET OF IBN ṬULŪN IN CAIRO

The minaret of Ibn Ṭulūn's Mosque has received special attention from historians as well as more recently archaeologists. Its importance is surely due to the strange shape of the minaret which stands unique among all the Islamic minarets in Egypt.

The minaret rises to a height of 40.44 m. (133 ft.) above the ground.<sup>(1)</sup> It is built of blocks of hard limestone, and is divided into four storeys [Fig. 70] of which the lowest is approximately square in plan and measures 12.76 m. from east to west, and 13.69 m. from north to south; it is 21.35 m. in

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1. S.A.E.M.A., p.314.

height,<sup>(1)</sup> with a staircase on the outside which makes one complete turn round it in an anti-clockwise direction.<sup>(2)</sup> Above this is another storey, circular in plan and 8.82 m. (29 ft.) in height including the parapet (69 cm.; 27 in.) with an outside staircase which makes a little more than half a turn round it.<sup>(3)</sup> Above this is a little octagonal kiosk of two storeys. The second landing of the staircase is connected with the roof of the mosque by a stone bridge, borne on two parallel horse-shoe arches [Fig. 71] 4.04 m. in span. This bridge abuts against the mosque in an absolutely inorganic fashion, its width extending from the middle of the twelfth to the middle of the thirteenth window from the right.<sup>(4)</sup>

The theories that have been put forward to explain the architectural form may be divided into two groups, the first holding that the Malwiya of Sāmarrā served as a model for the minaret of Ibn Ṭūlūn,<sup>(5)</sup> whereas the second believe that the minaret was copied from the Pharos of Alexandria.<sup>(6)</sup>

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1. E.M.A., II, p.350; S.A.E.M.A., p.314.
  2. Ibid., II, p.350; Ibid., p.314.
  3. S.A.E.M.A., p.314; E.M.A., II, p.350.
  4. S.A.E.M.A., p.314.
  5. See E.M.A., II, pp.350-6; Creswell suggests in E.M.A., II, p.355 and in E.I./2, I, art. "Architecture", p.622 that if the present minaret of Ibn Ṭūlūn's mosque was the original one it was probably fairly similar to the Malwiya of Sāmarrā.
  6. This was suggested firstly by Butler in his book, Arab Conquest of Egypt and the last thirty years of the Roman dominion, p.398; followed by Van Berchem in Corpus inscriptionum Arabicarum, p.481.

The ancient Pharos of Alexandria was constructed by Sostratus of Cnidus in the reign of Ptolemy, II, Philadelphus (285-247 B.C.)<sup>(1)</sup> It has been described by the Arab historians Yā'qūt and al-Qazwīnī, both of whom lived in the thirteenth century.

Yā'qūt says: "The minaret (so-called he should call it as a tower) is a square building. It has a wide stairway which a horseman can ascend on his horse and the ascent is roofed over with slabs that rest upon the two walls that enclose the staircase. One mounts up to an elevated platform with encircling battlements, from which one has an outlook over the sea. In this there is a construction like a square tower which one ascends by another series of steps, and from there one can look down upon the roof of the first stage. This second area is also surrounded by battlements. In this space there is a pavilion like a watchman's Cabin"<sup>(2)</sup> Yā'qūt also produces a simple plan of the Pharos [See Fig. 72].

Yā'qūt's statement above mentioned is of great value, both because it gives quite a lot of information regarding the architectural features of the Pharos, and because it was seen by him personally.

Two important facts may be gathered from this statement; first the ascent of Pharos was from the outside and it was

1. Rivoira, op.cit., p.144.

2. Mu'jam, I, p.263; Gottheil, op.cit., pp.147f.



roofed with slabs, and secondly it reminds us of Herzfeld's suggestion that the Tower of Gūr was covered by a rising tunnel vault.<sup>(1)</sup>

If the form of the Pharos's ascent is not very clear from Yā'qūt's statement, an earlier report written by Ibn Khurradadbih, who died at the end of the ninth century, makes it fairly clear for he states that "the horsemen and the footmen ascend round it up to its top as in the minaret of Sāmarrā."<sup>(2)</sup>

Consequently the minaret of Ibn Ṭūlūn corresponds closely to the Pharos of Alexandria with regard to the nature of the external stairway. But this stairway was roofed **in the case** of the Pharos while it was unroofed in the minaret of Ibn Ṭūlūn.

This evidence suggests that some similarity existed between the two buildings concerning the system of the stairway, for in both cases it ran round the body of the building.

Herzfeld thinks that the Pharos was rebuilt in accordance with the form of the minaret of Ibn Ṭūlūn.<sup>(3)</sup> This seems unlikely, however, for the historical evidence does not mention any sort of reconstruction or rebuilding in the time of Ibn

1. See E.M.A., II, p.263.

2. Masālik wa-l-mamālik, pp.114f.

3. Sāmarrā, p.35.

Ṭūlūn, but Maqrīzī states that "he (Ibn Ṭūlūn) repaired it and added a dome (Qubbah) on its top."<sup>(1)</sup>

One must also admit that although they both have a square base, they differ in the nature of the various storeys. Gottheil points out, the forms of the second and the third are reversed.<sup>(2)</sup> The minaret of Ibn Ṭūlūn has four storeys, one square, one circular and two octagonal, one above the other [Fig. 73], while the Pharos consisted of three storeys: the first square, the second octagonal and the third round.

Those who suggested that the Malwīya of Sāmarrā served as a model for the minaret of Ibn Ṭūlūn, seems to have followed the historians.

The earliest statement, as it seems, was made by al-Maqrīzī who undoubtedly saw the Mosque of Ibn Ṭūlūn during his visit to Cairo in the tenth century. He describes the minaret as "being small and made of stone, and having a staircase on the outside."<sup>(3)</sup>

1. Khiṭaṭ, pp.253f., the text is quite clear, though Gottheil says op.cit., p.146 (footnote No.6) that the text is not quite plain. Al-Maqrīzī says "Aḥmad ibn Ṭūlūn made some repairs in it (the minaret) and placed on the top Qubbah (dome) of wood, that whoever entered it (the minaret) might be able to go to the top. It was spacious but without a stairway."
2. Op.cit., p.146.
3. Op.cit., p.199.

Maqdisī's statement, however, probably refers to the original minaret which was constructed by Ibn Ṭulūn. Unfortunately he made no attempts at comparison, nor did he suggest any sort of similarity between the minarets of Cairo and Sāmarrā, although his book shows clearly that quite considerable observations and some architectural comparisons could have been made; for instance: described the Mosque of Fasa in Fars as bigger than that of Shīrāz; he stated that it had two Sahns (courtyards) like the Mosque of Madīnat-as-Salām (i.e. Baghdād);<sup>(1)</sup> between the two courtyards there was a saqifa.<sup>(2)</sup>

In the following century (the eleventh century) al-Quḍā'ī (died in 454 A.H./1062 A.D.) suggested that Ibn Ṭulūn built his mosque after the style of the mosque of Sāmarrā and likewise the minaret, although the work of al-Quḍā'ī has been lost, the statement mentioned above has been preserved in the work of the Egyptian historians, ibn Duqmaq and al-Maqrīzī.<sup>(3)</sup>

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1. He means The Great Mosque of al-Manṣūr in the Round City.
  2. Op.cit., p.431; see in detail E.M.A., II, p.32; Archäologische Reise, II, p.137f. al-Amid, op.cit., pp.290f.
  3. Ibn Duqmaq, al-Intiṣar lī-Wāsiṭaf 'iqd al-amṣār, IV, p.123; al-Maqrīzī, Khitaṭ, II, p.266 (numbered as 267).

The historical evidence available shows that al-Quḍā'ī had not seen the two minarets of Sāmarrā and Abū Dulaf and it may therefore be concluded that his statement is not necessarily correct, in spite of the fact, as Gottheil states, that al-Quḍā'ī stood in high renown among Muḥammedan historians of Egypt, and his work was used liberally by all who have written on the history and the antiquities of the country.<sup>(1)</sup>

Nevertheless, the description cited above suggests that the minaret of Ibn Ṭūlūn's mosque was in many ways different from the Malwīya of Sāmarrā [Fig. 75], although it resembled the latter in having a square base, and a stairway running round it on the outside, further both were built outside the mosques in the Ziyadas (additions), the similarities are not enough to indicate that the minaret was a direct copy of the Malwīya, but we must not ignore the historical facts which indicate that Aḥmad ibn Ṭūlūn had been brought up in Sāmarrā, where he received his military training and he lived in the period when al-Mu'taṣim and al-Mutawakkil, both of whom were interested in architecture, were Califs in Sāmarrā. It is therefore quite possible that in building his mosque he suggested a specific characteristic to the architect.

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1. Op.cit., p.147.

Thus, it is possible to suggest that the minaret of Ibn Ṭūlūn, though not a direct copy of the Malwiya of Sāmarrā or the Pharos of Alexandria, nevertheless received some architectural influence from both.

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I L L U S T R A T I O N S

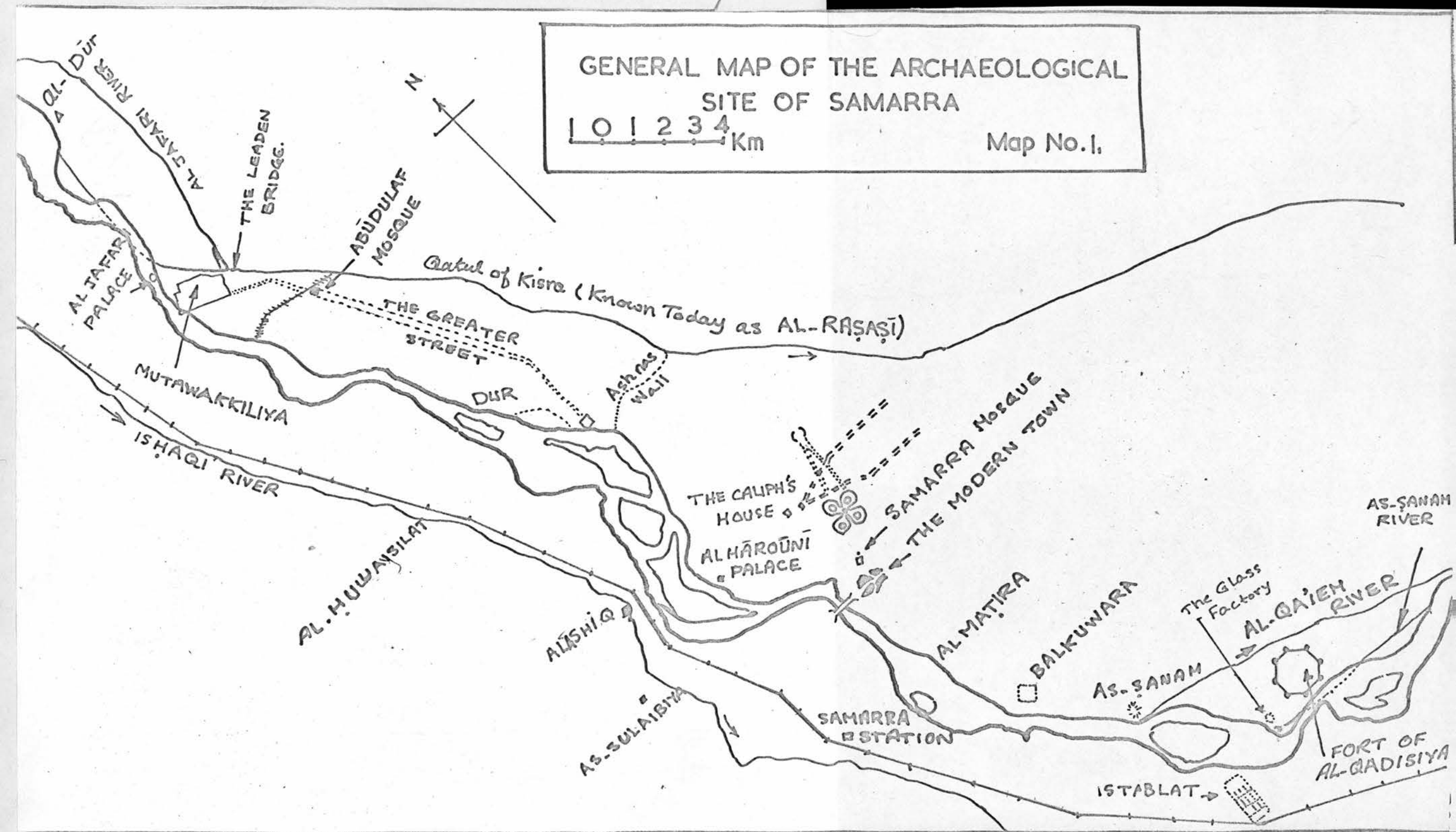


Fig. 1. General map of the archaeological site (MAP.No.1)



القائم - ونهر القائم  
Al-Qa'im and al-Qa'im Canal.

Fig. 2. Burj al-Qa'im and the River of al-Qa'im



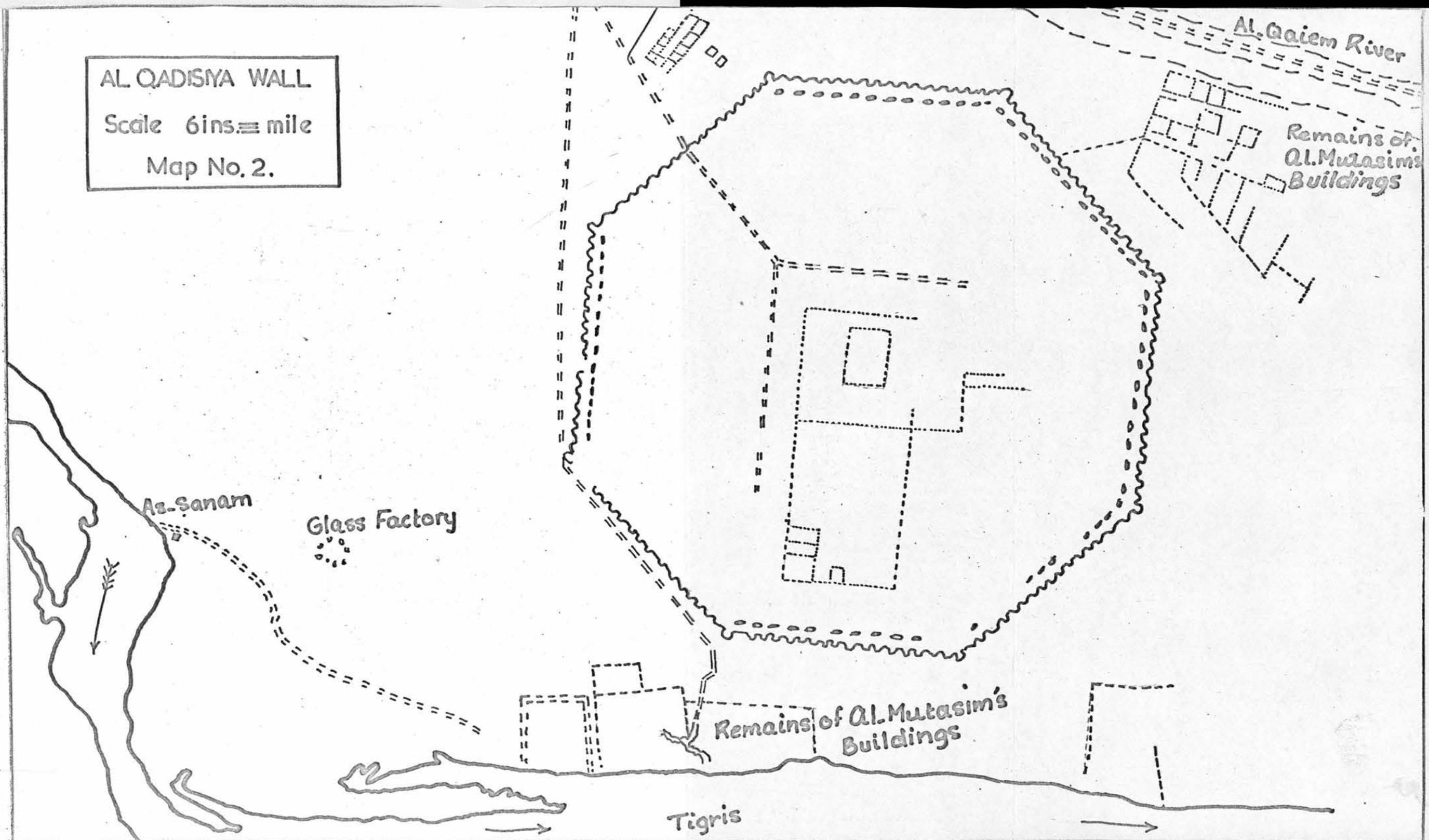


Fig. 3. al-Qadisiya wall (Map No.2)



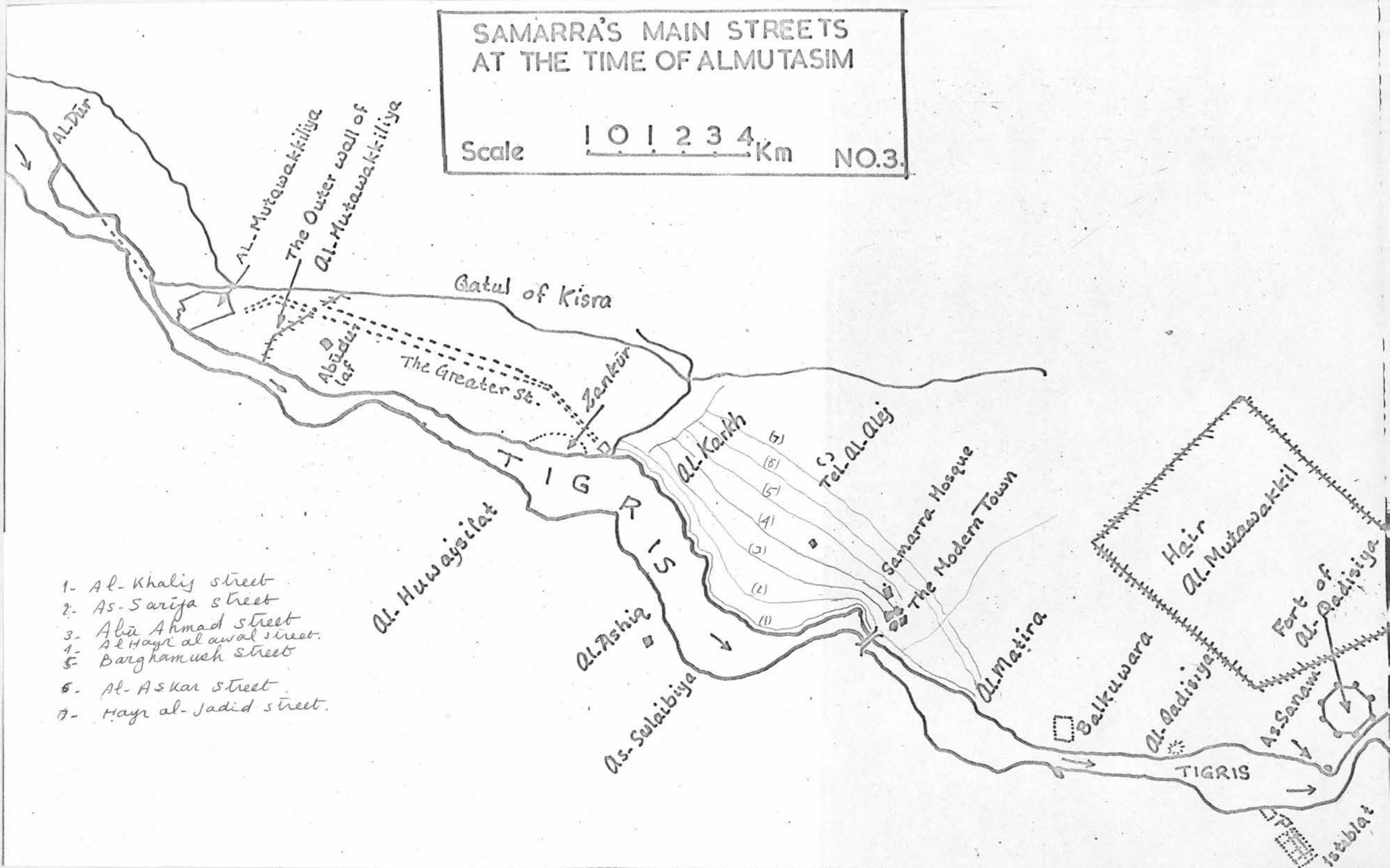


Fig. 4. Sāmarrā's main streets at the time of al-Mu'tasim and al-Mutawakkil (Map No.3)





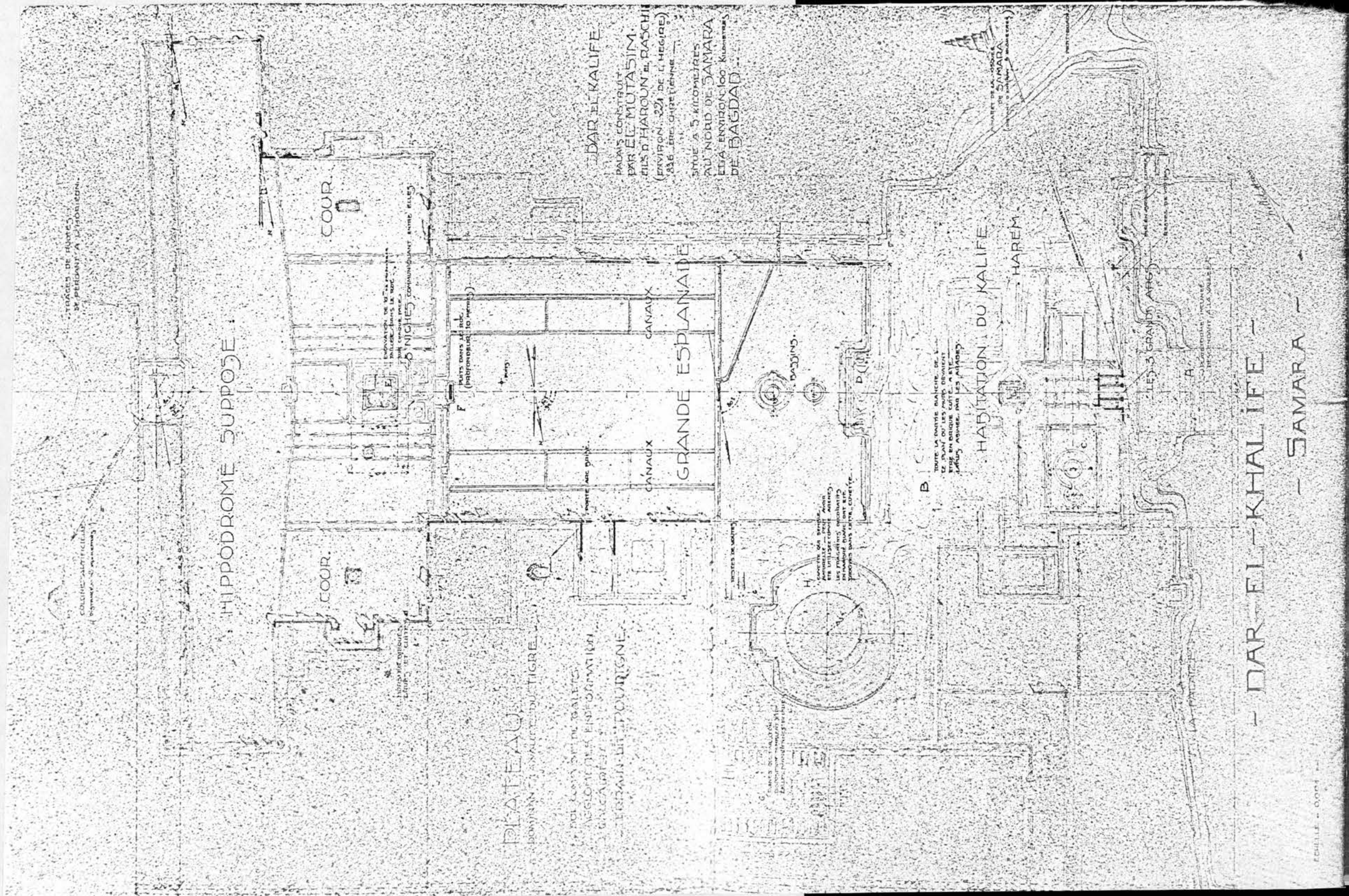


Fig. 6. A general plan of Dar al-Calif (by Viollet 1907)

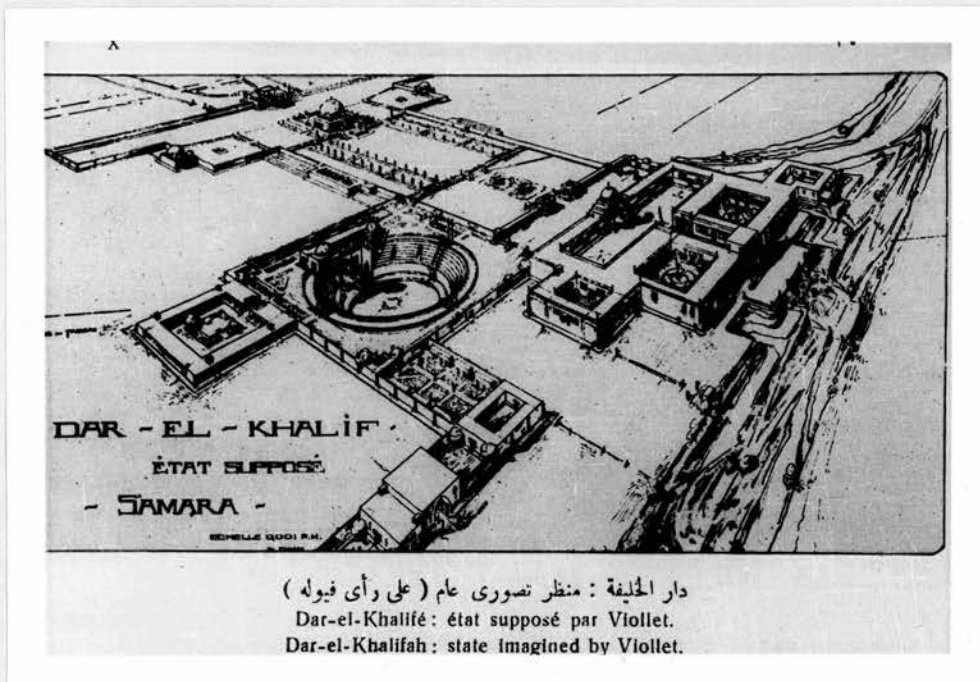


Fig. 7. Dar al-Calif: state imagined by Viollet



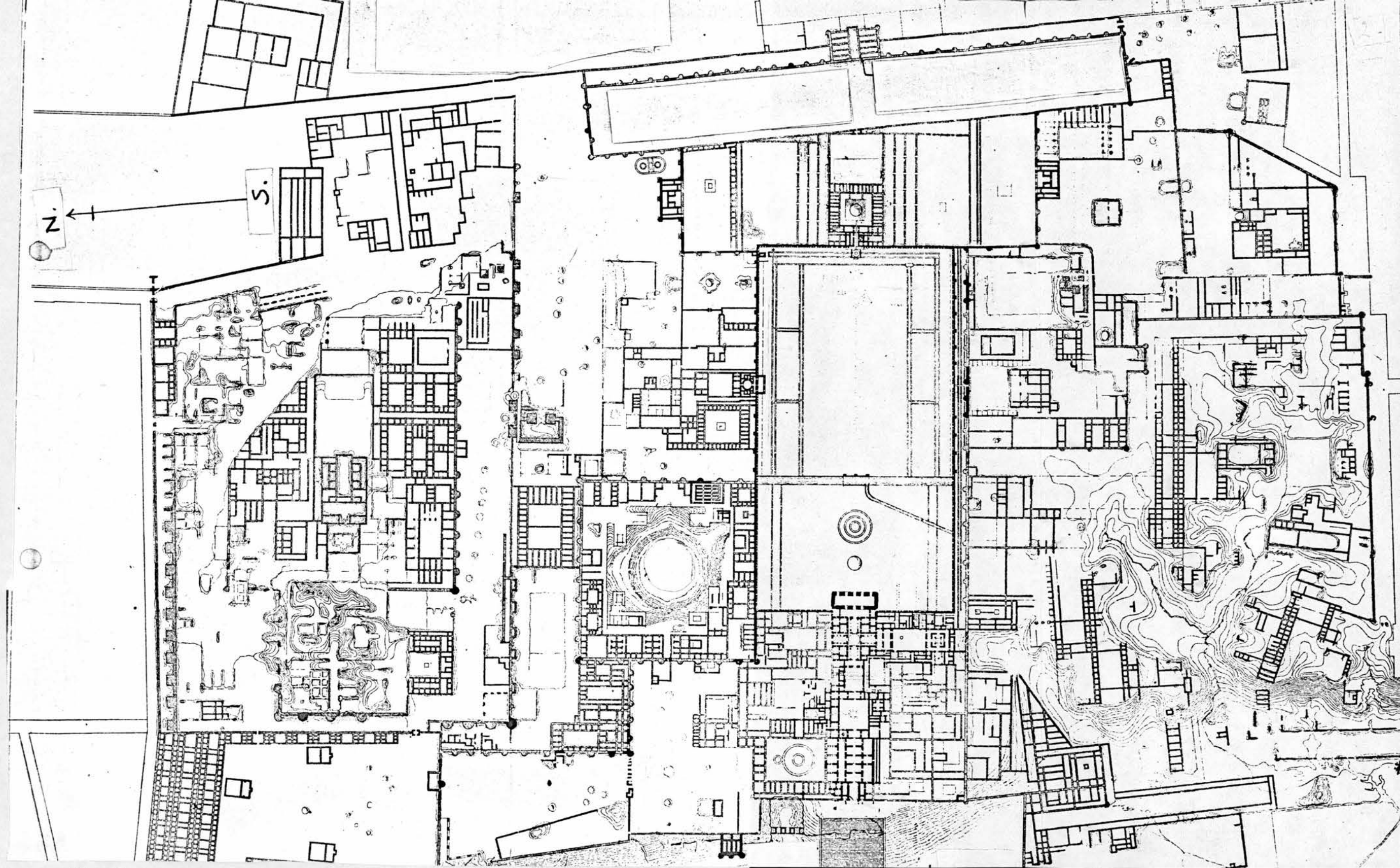


Fig. 8. A general plan of Dar al-Calif by Herzfeld

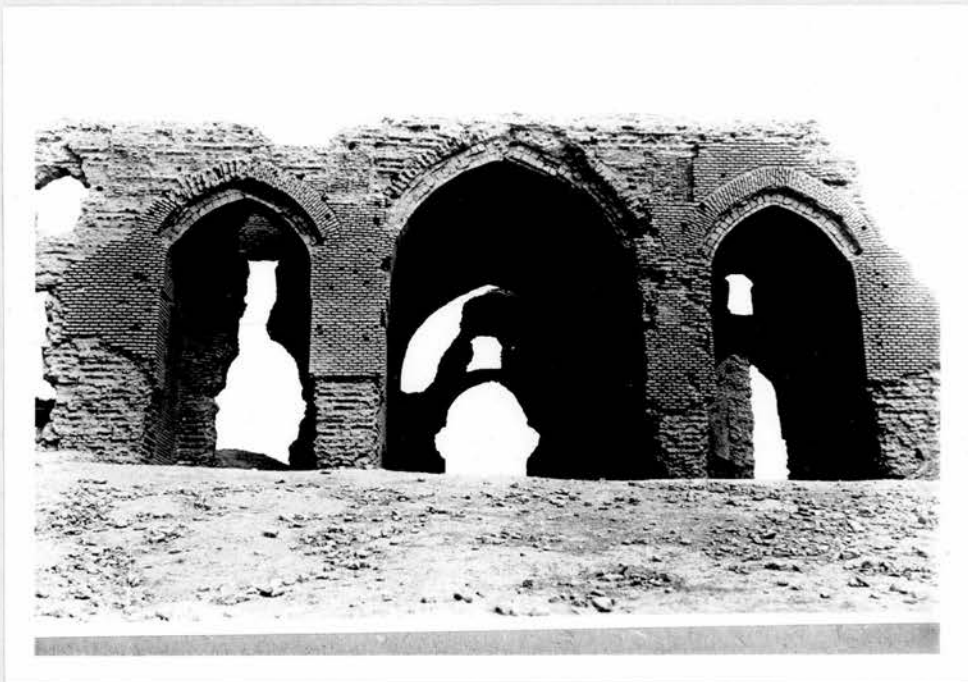


Fig. 9. Bāb al-‘Āmma



Fig. 10(a) The back gate of the Central Liwān taken from inside



Fig. 10(b) The back gate of the Central Liwān taken from outside



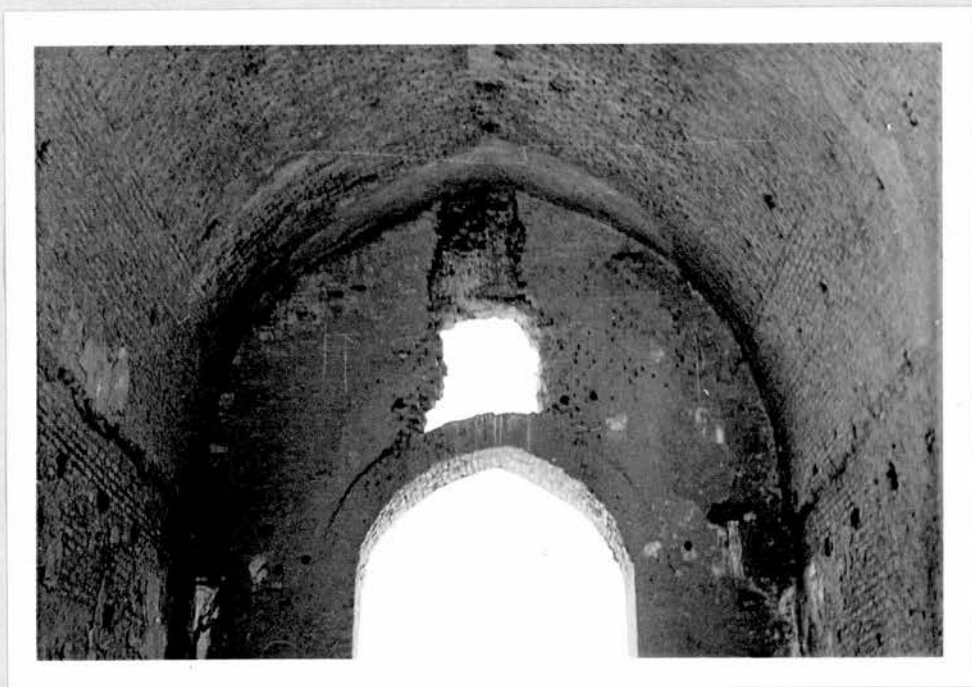


Fig. 11. Pointed arched window above the back gate



Fig. 12. The part behind the frontal arch of the right room

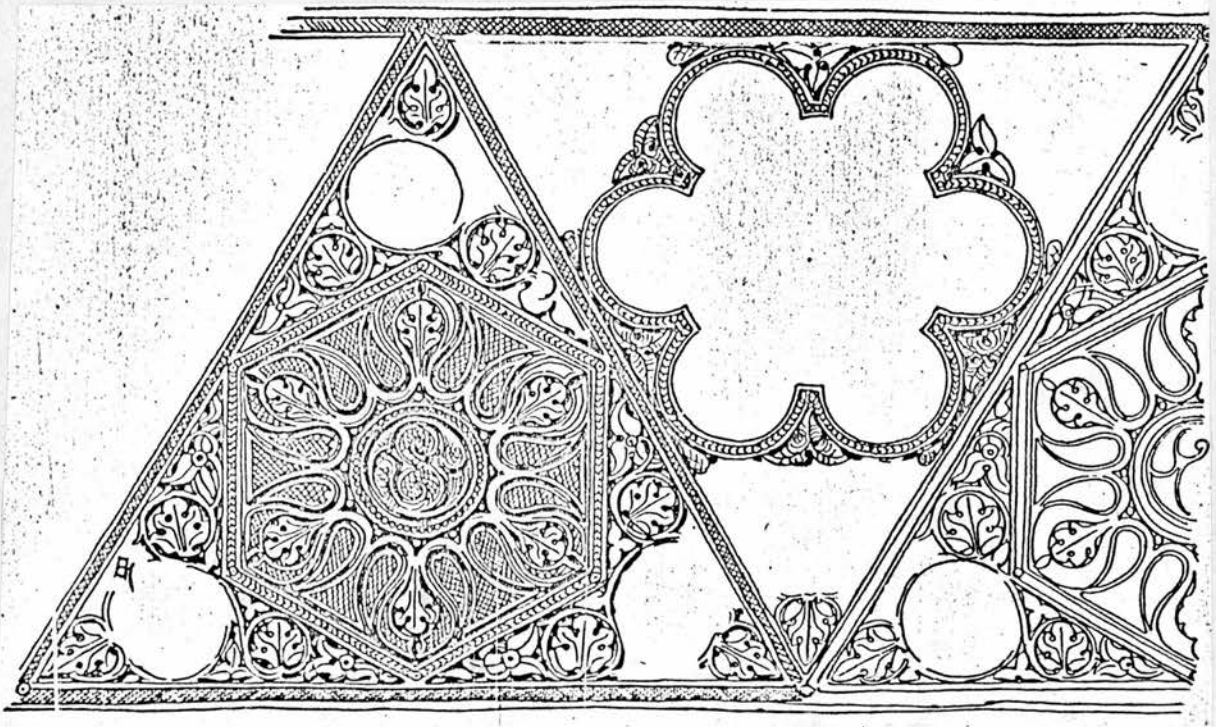


Fig. 13. Bāb al-‘Āmma: Herzfeld's reconstruction from fragments of stucco

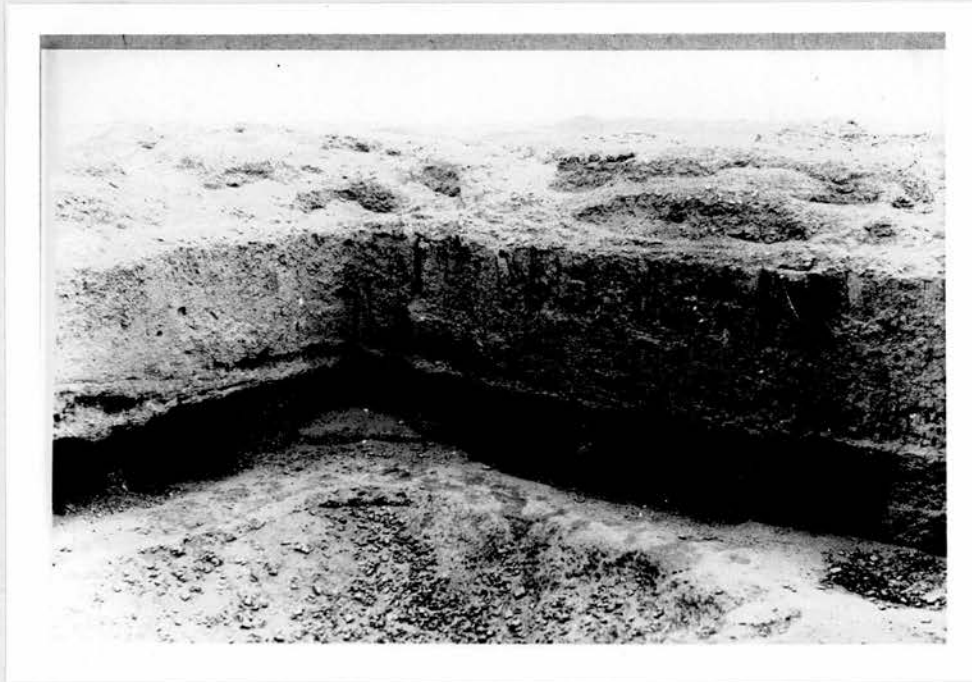


Fig. 14(a) Little Serdāb: The southern and eastern grottes



Fig. 14(b) Little Serdāb: The southern grottes





Fig. 15. The corridor through which the three grottes in each side communicate

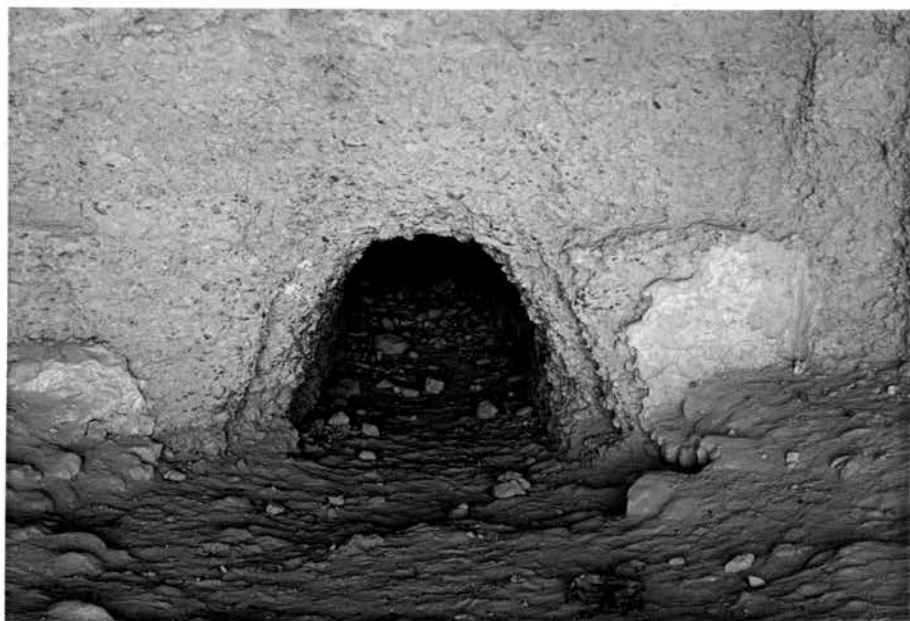


Fig. 16. The tunnel where the lions lived

Fig. 17. The hole through which the prisoners were thrown  
in 71 A.D.





Fig. 17. The hole through which the prisoners were thrown to lions.

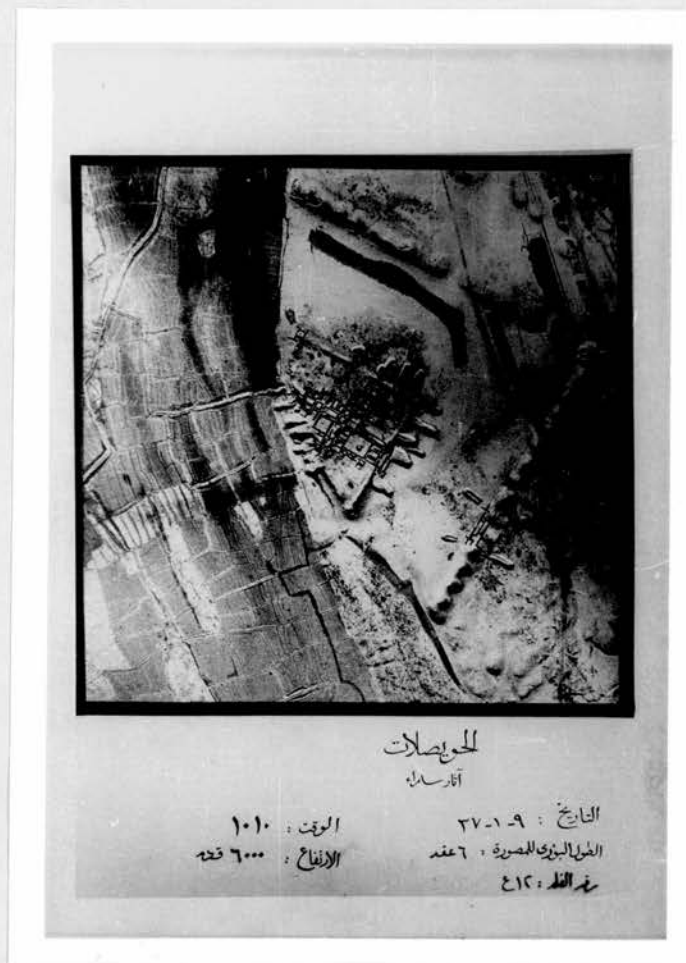


Fig. 18. The ruins of al-Huwaysilat

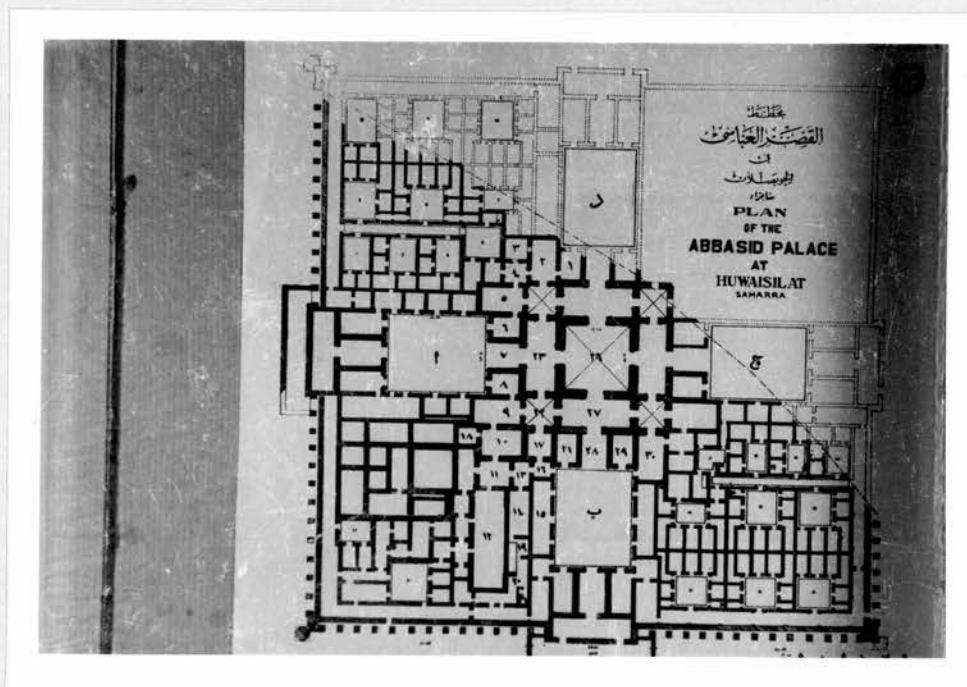


Fig. 19. The plan of al-Huwaisilat

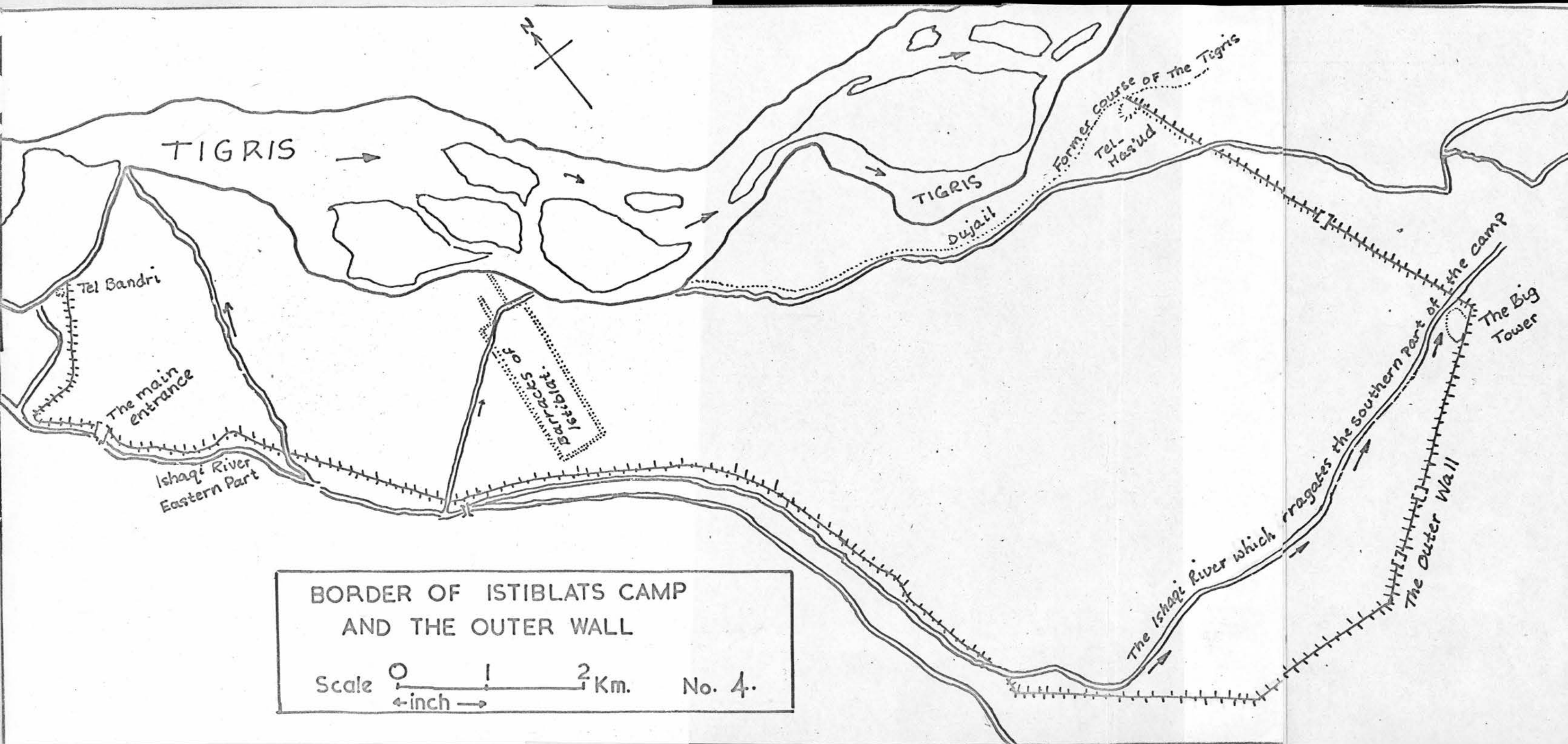


Fig. 20. Border of Istiblat's camp and the outer wall (Map No.4)



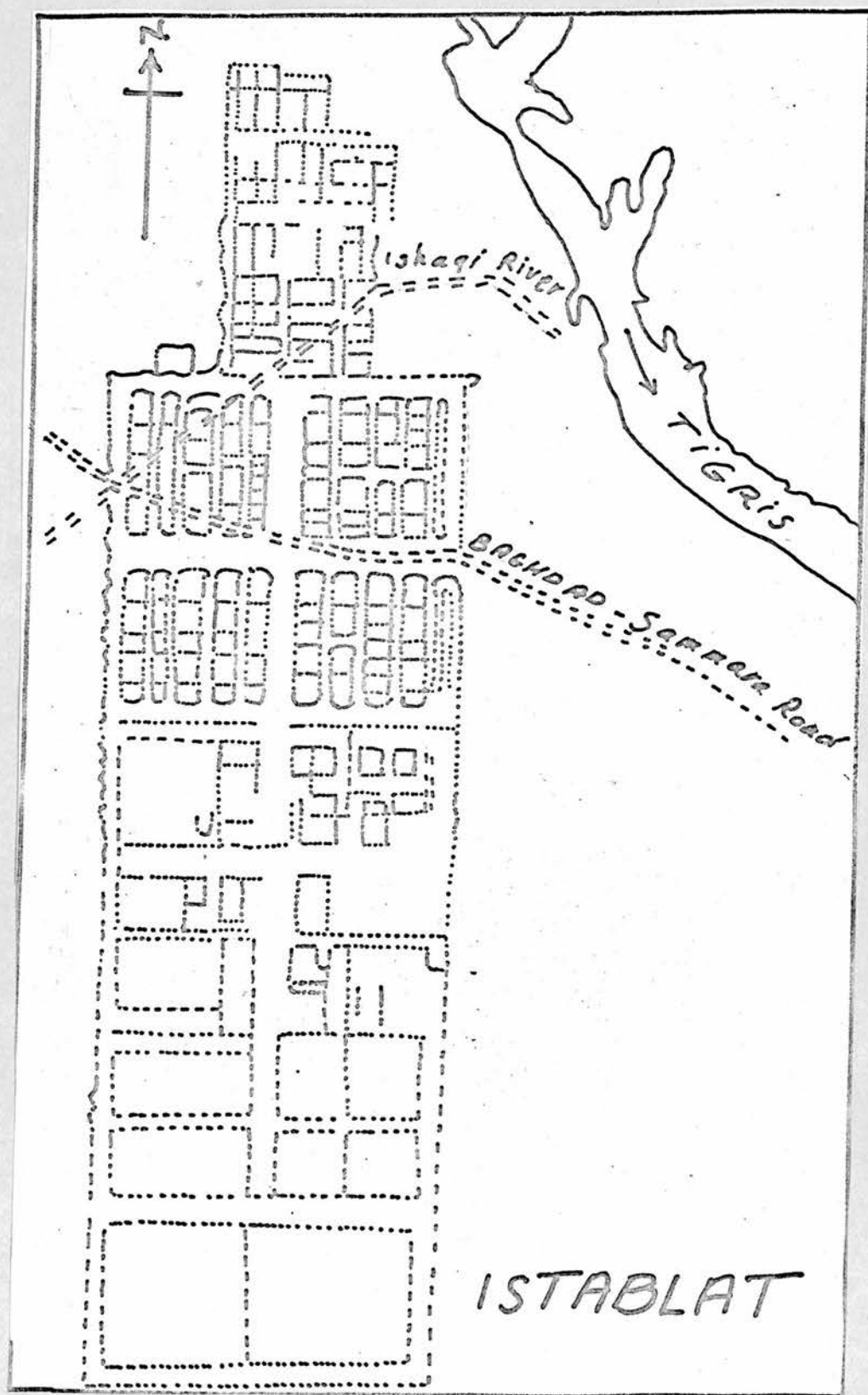


Fig. 21. The Plan of Iştablat

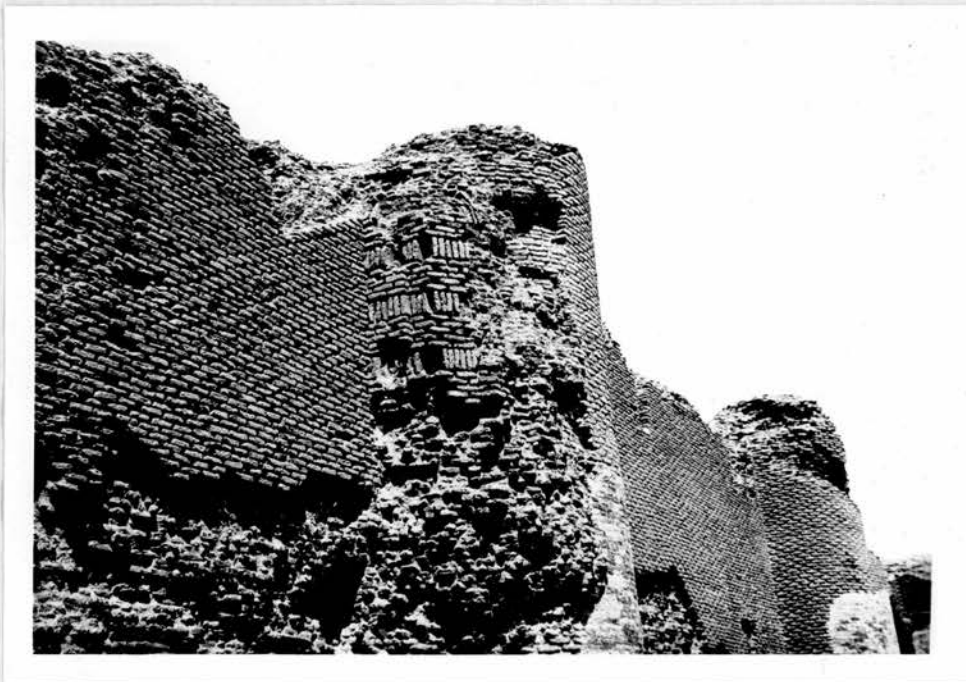


Fig. 22. Great Mosque: The outer wall before restoration



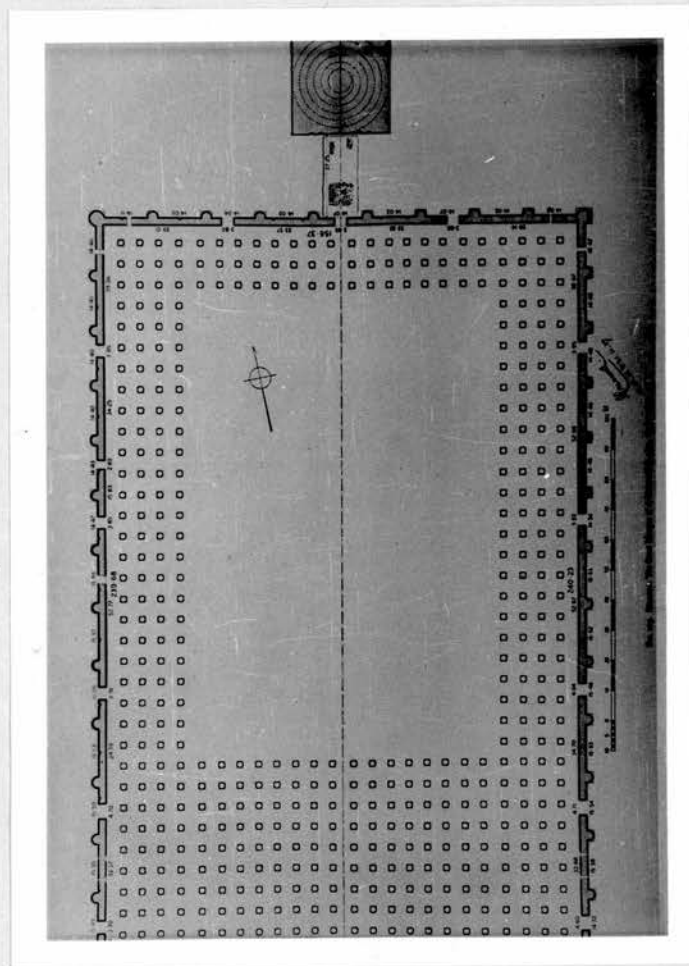


Fig. 23. Great Mosque: Creswell's Plan

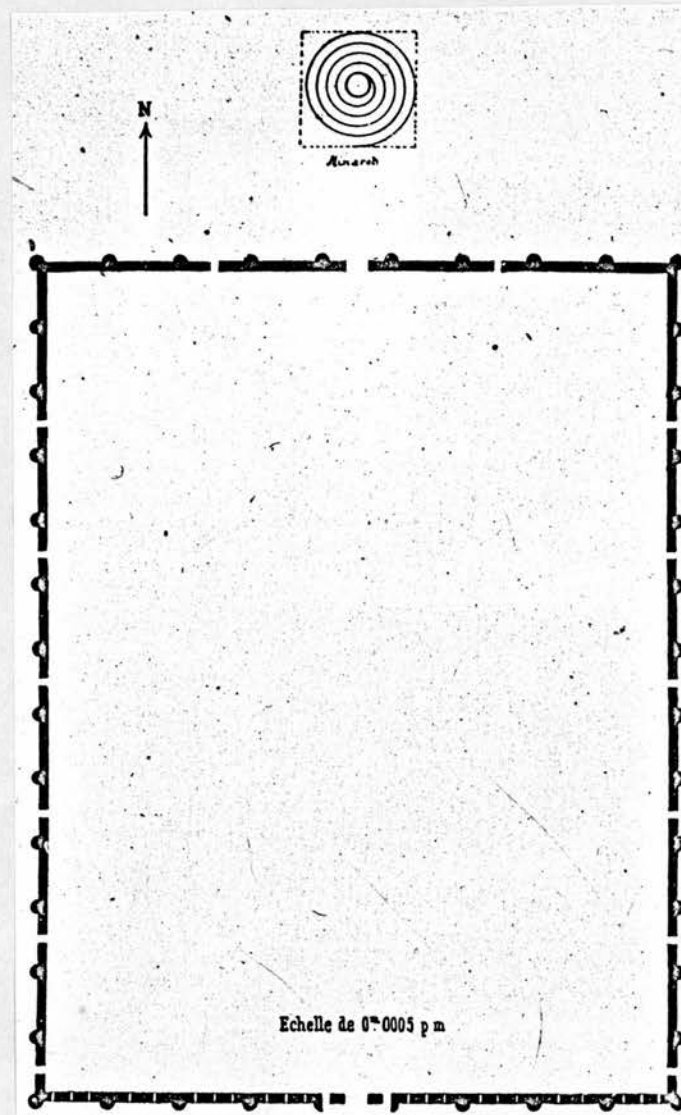


Fig. 24. Great Mosque: Beylie's Plan

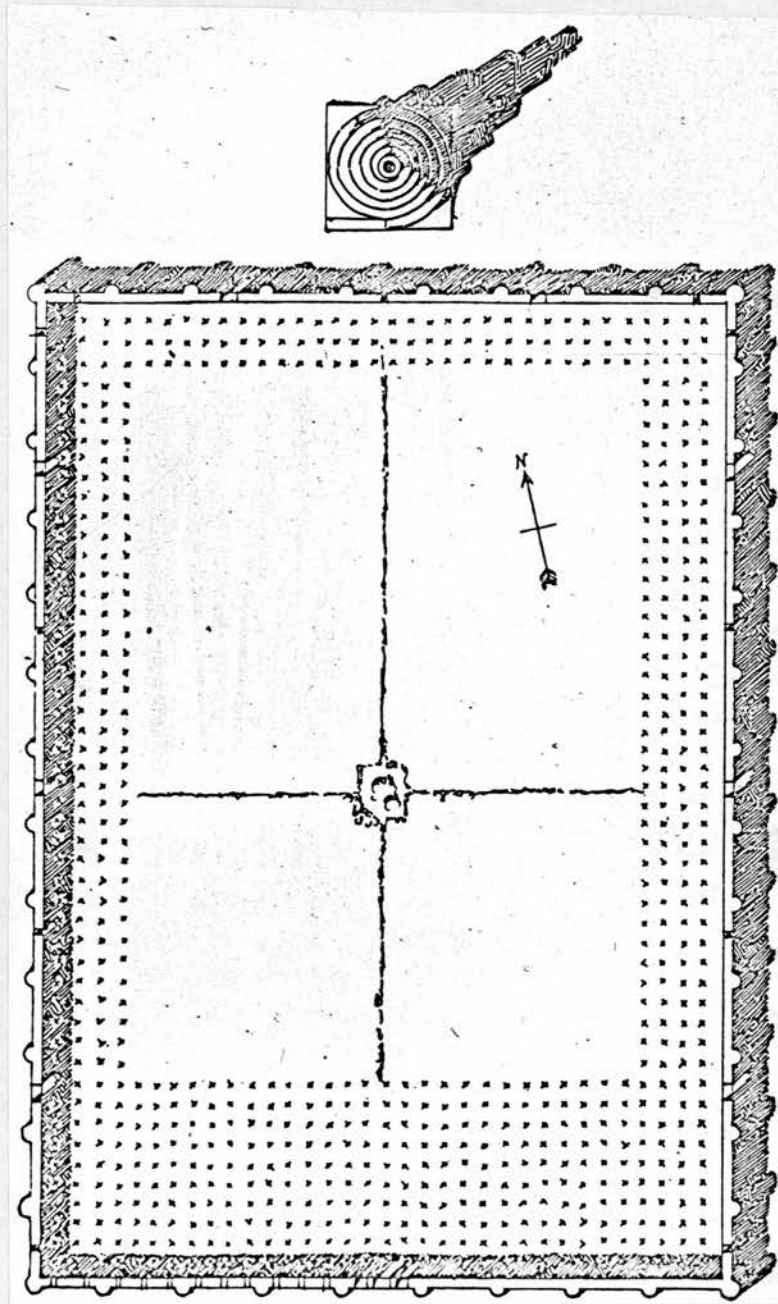


Fig.25. Great Mosque: Herzfild's Plan

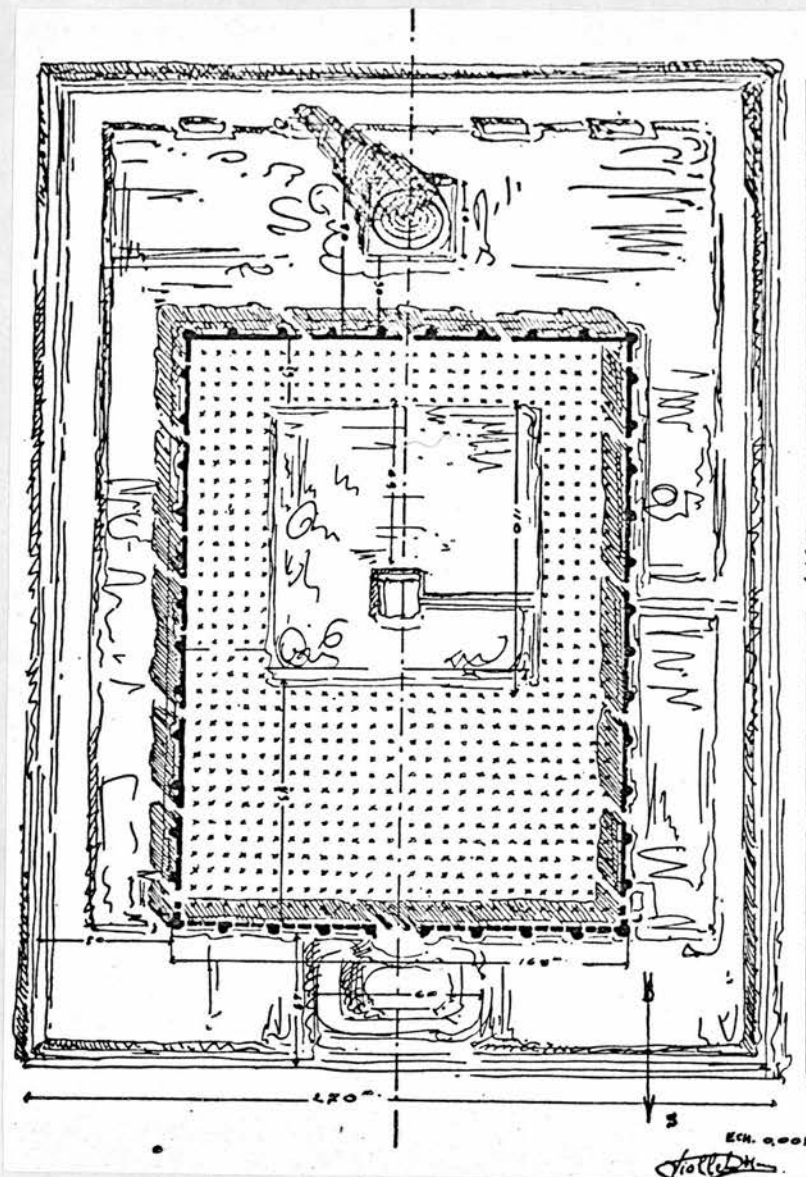
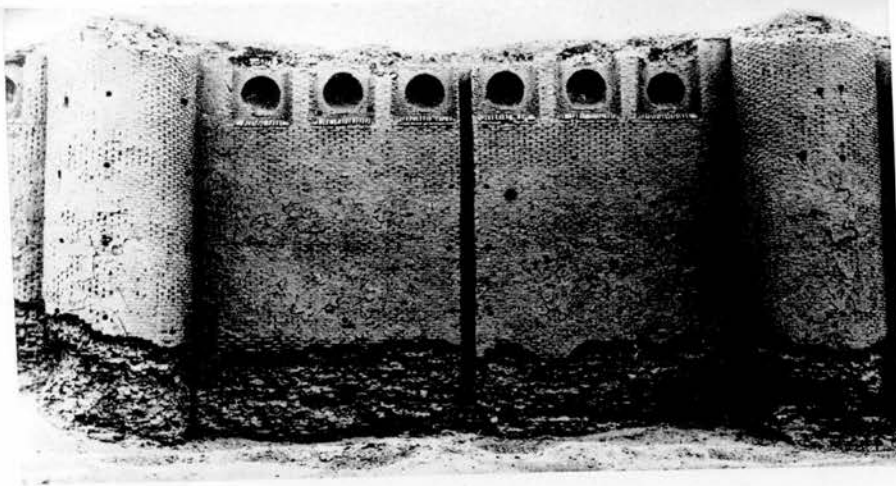


Fig. 26. Great Mosque: Viollet's Plan





الجامع الكبير : منظر قطعة من الجدار  
La grande mosquée : vue d'une partie de la muraille.  
The great mosque : a view of a part of the wall.

Fig. 27. Great Mosque: Part of the outer wall

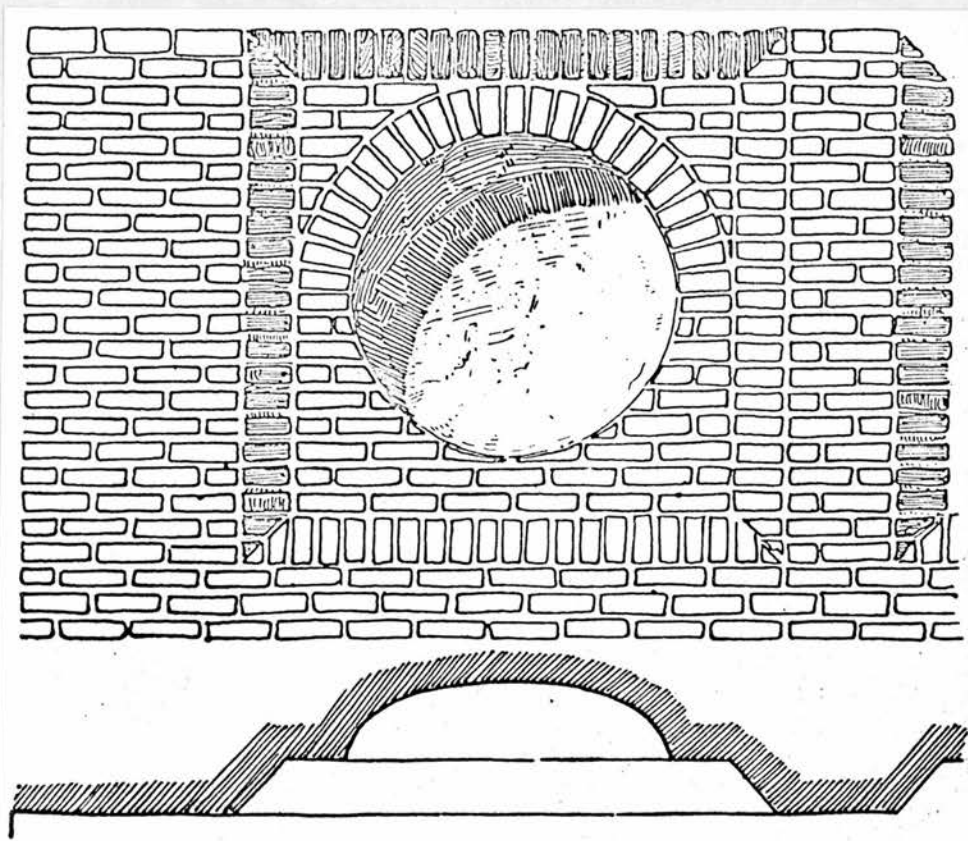


Fig. 28. Great Mosque: a recessed square in the curtain wall  
(from Herzfeld)



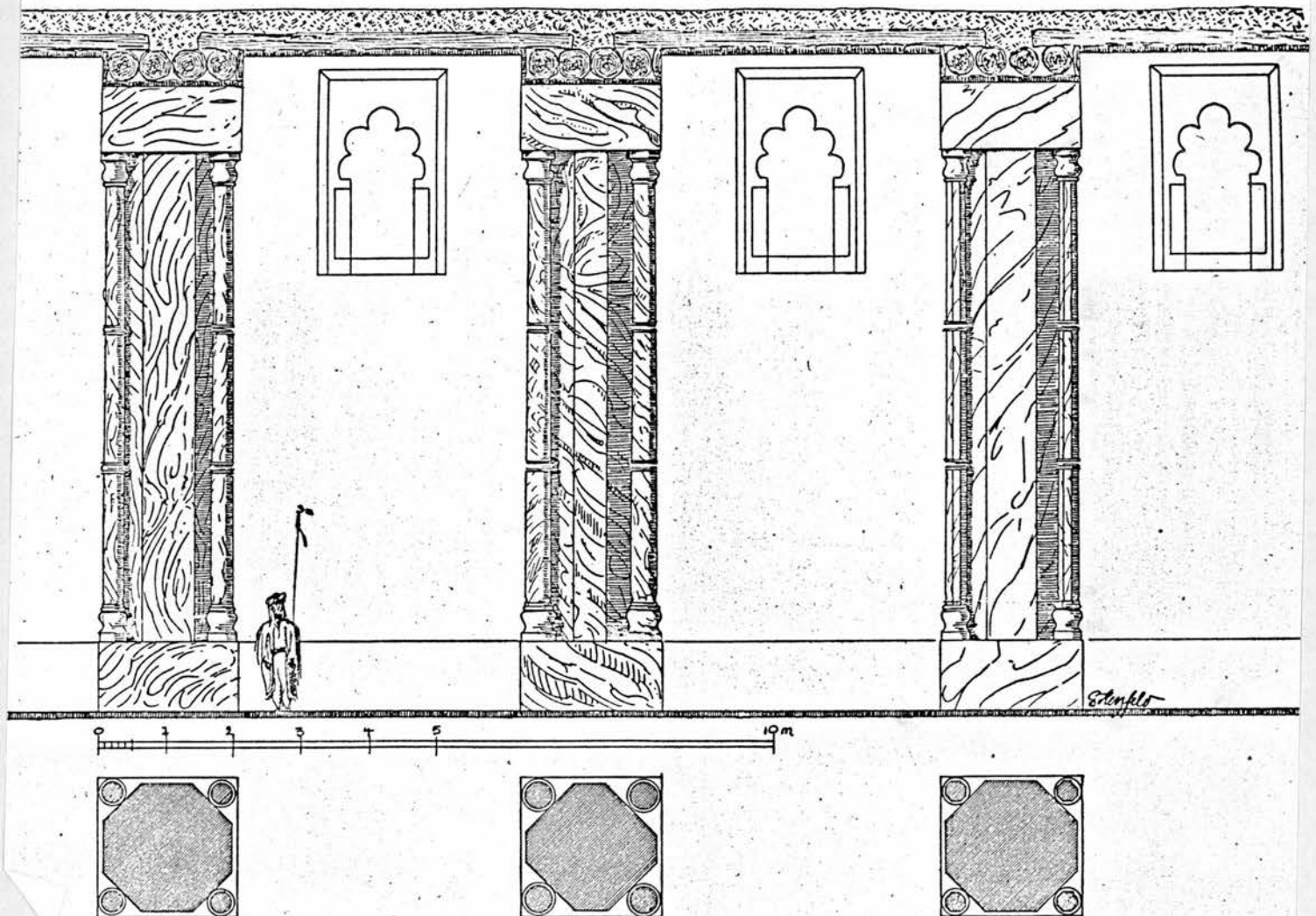


Fig. 29. Great Mosque: The windows in the south wall  
(from Herzfeld)

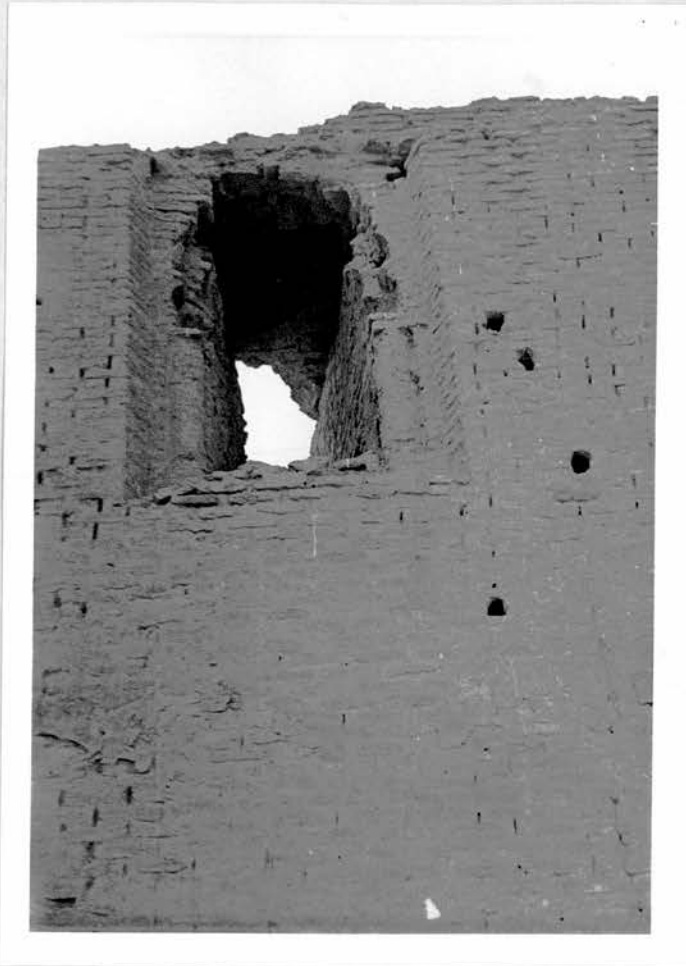


Fig. 30(a) Great Mosque: One of the windows from inside (before restoration)

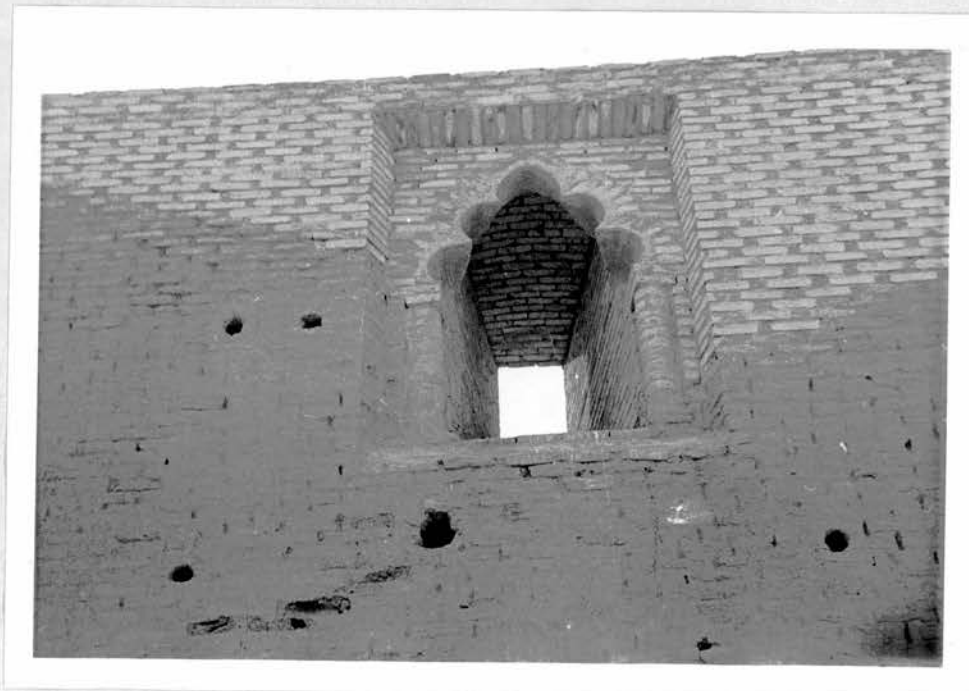


Fig. 30(b) Great Mosque: One of the windows from inside (after restoration)



Fig. 31(a) Great Mosque: The round marble column



Fig. 31(b) Great Mosque: The octagonal marble column



Fig. 32. Great Mosque: a layer of gypsum in the southern wall.





الجامع الكبير : منظر قطعة من الجدار  
 La grande mosquée : vue d'une partie de la muraille.  
 The great mosque : a view of a part of the wall.

Fig. 33. Great Mosque: the triple opening Mihrab in the middle

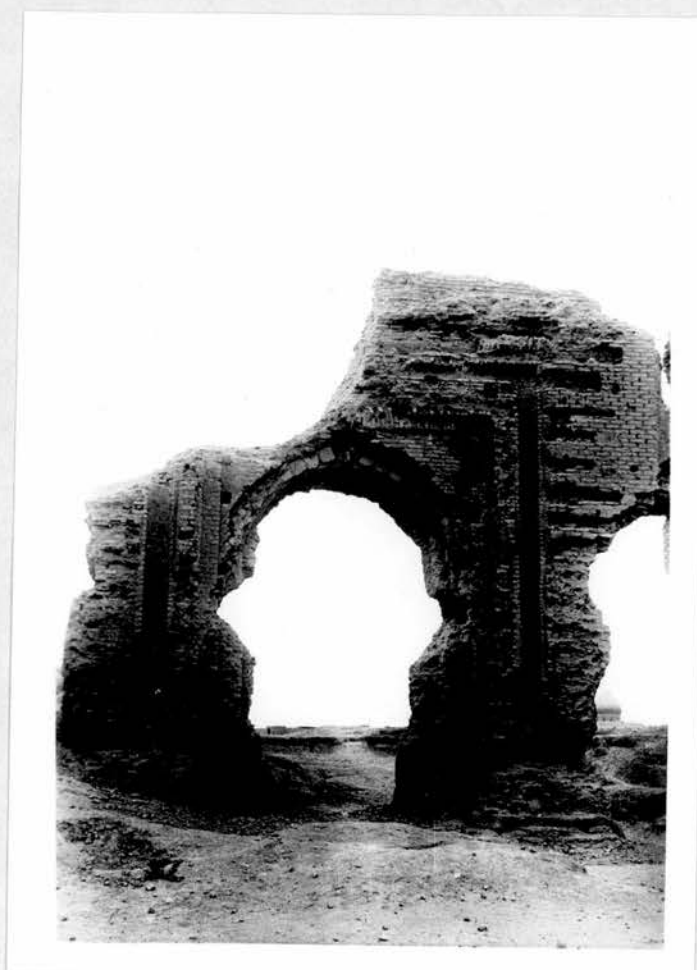


Fig. 34. Great Mosque: The Mihrab before restoration



Fig. 35. Great Mosque: Mihrab flanked with two doorways



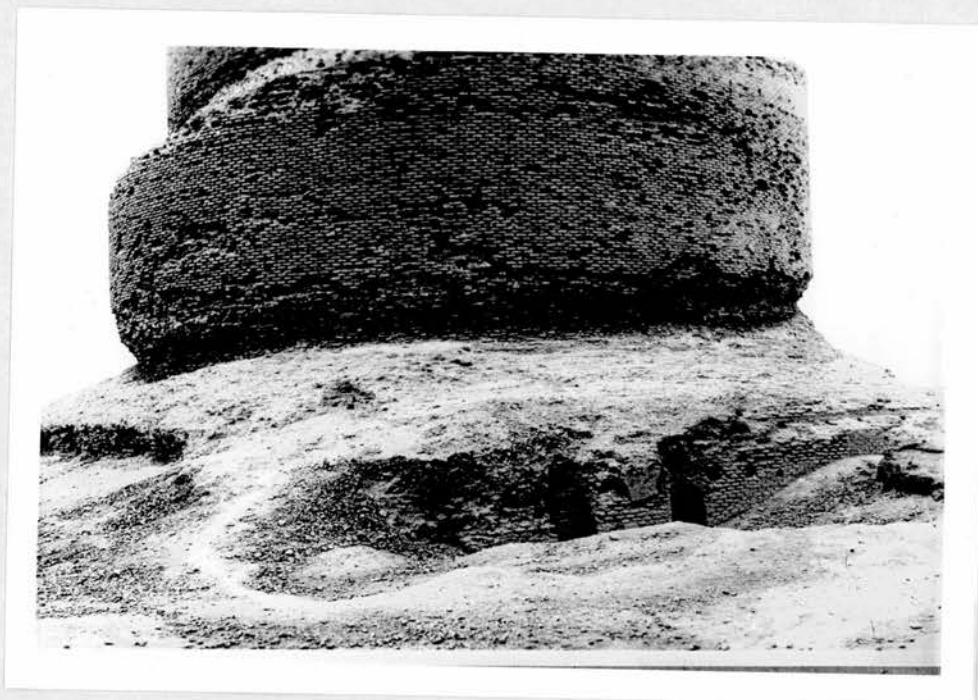


Fig. 36. Great Mosque: The base of the Minaret before restoration

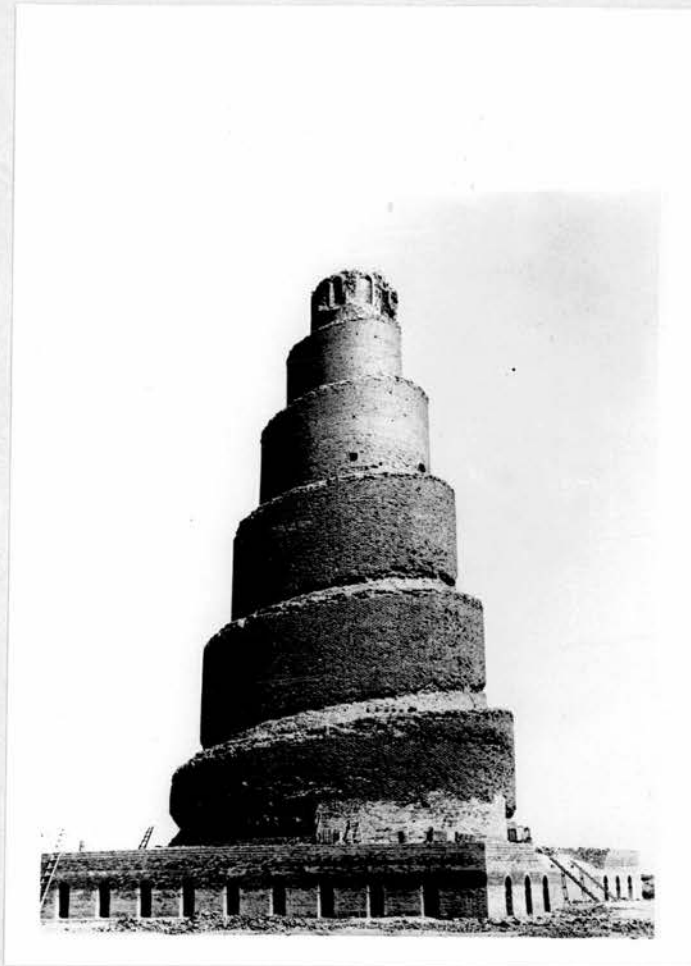


Fig. 37. Great Mosque: The Minaret and the base after restoration

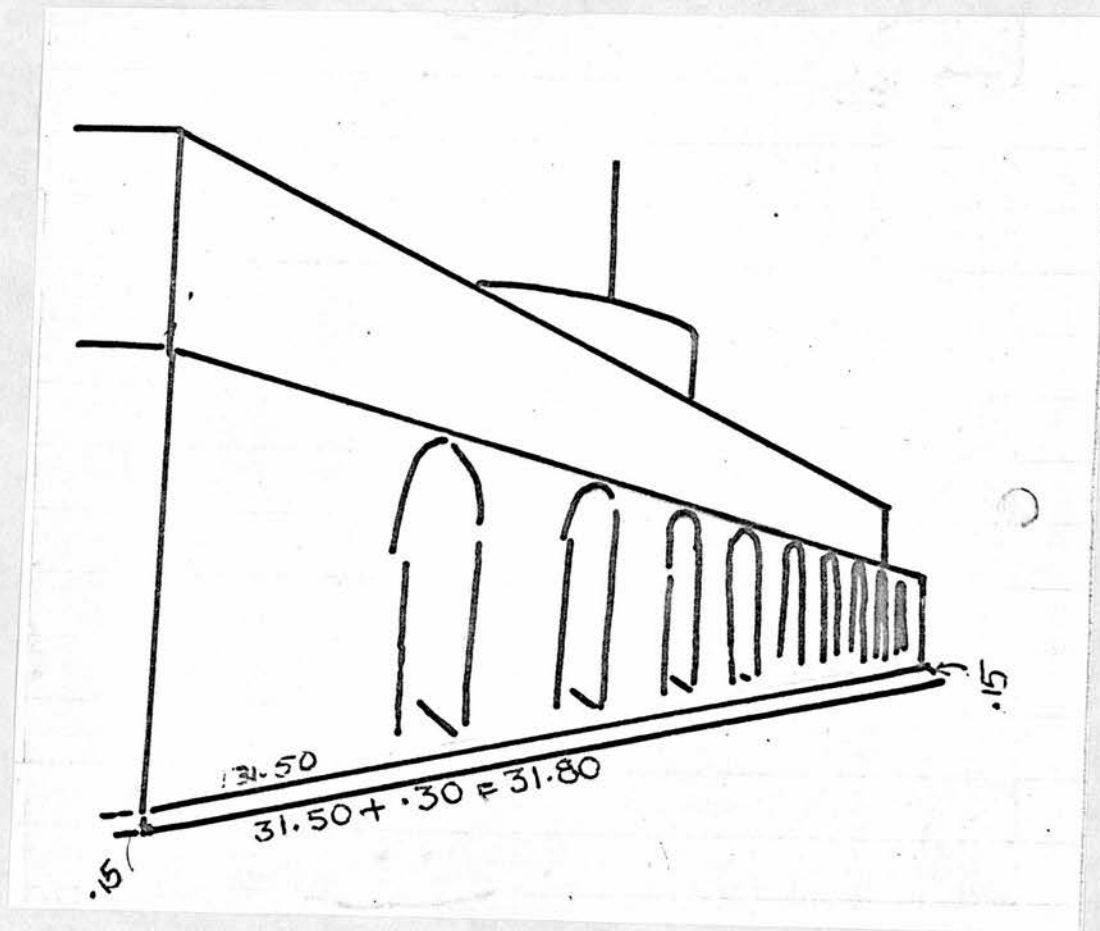


Fig. 38. Great Mosque: The east side of the base

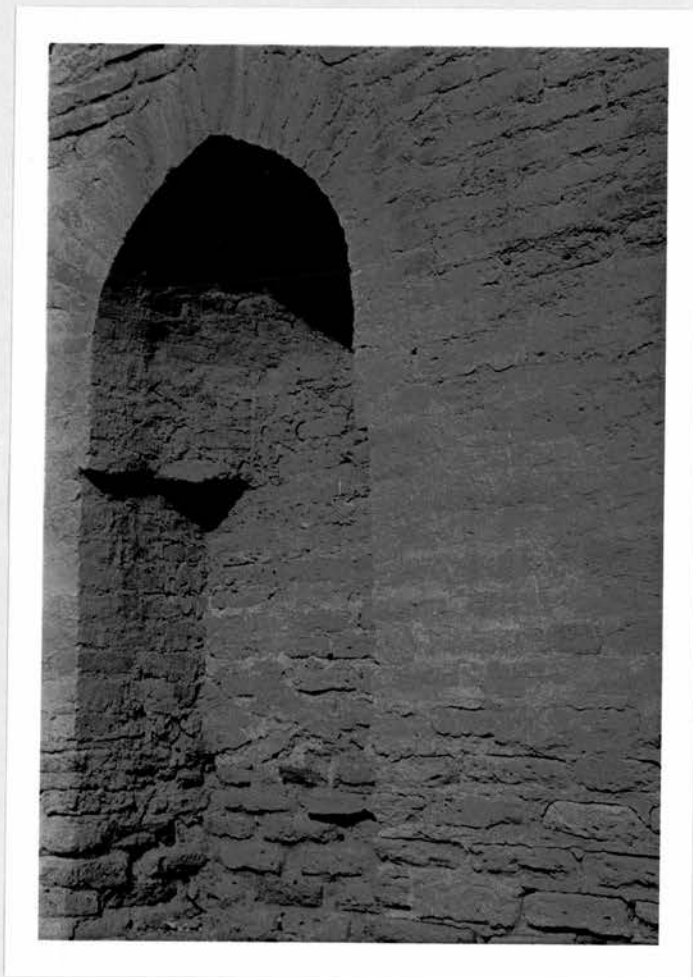


Fig. 39. Great Mosque: A niche on the base of the minaret

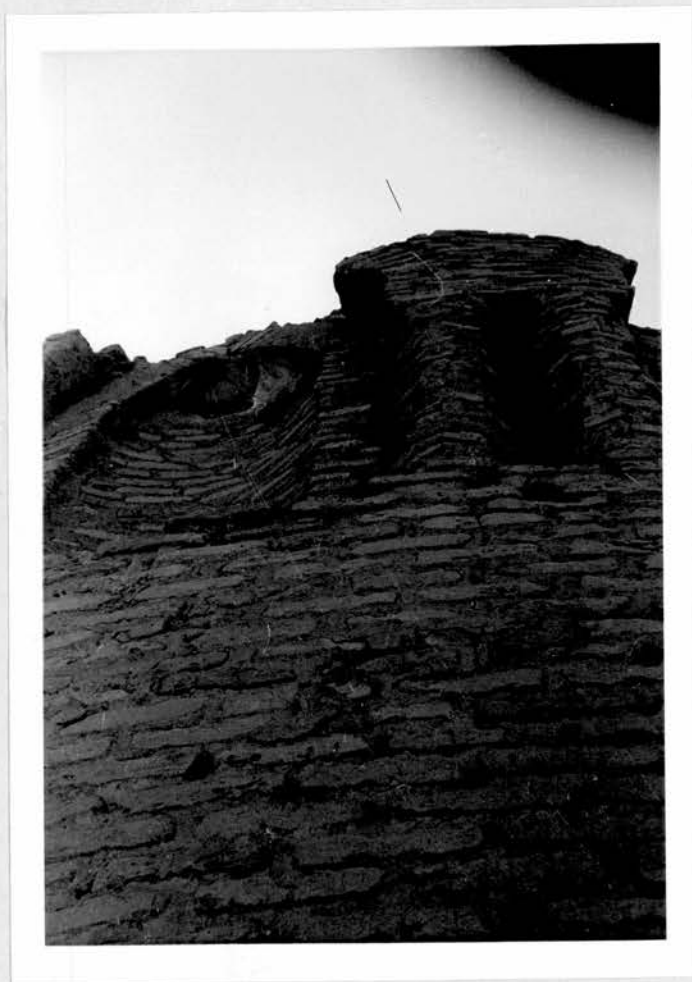


Fig. 40. Great Mosque: The cylindrical summit decorated by a niche (from Muhammad)



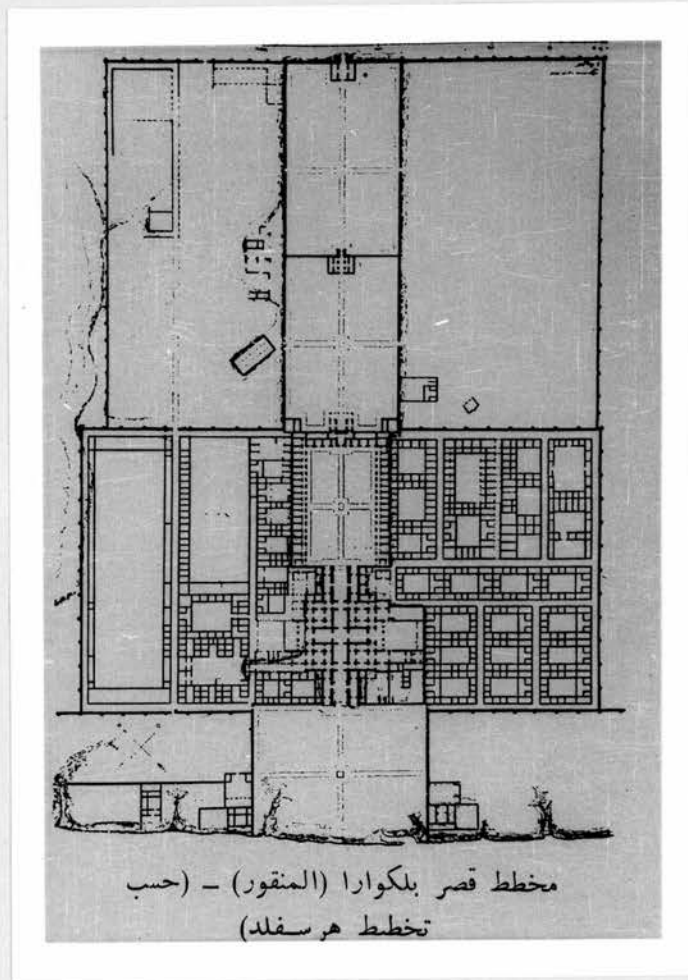


Fig. 41. Balkuwārā: The general plan by Herzfeld





Fig. 42. al-Mutawakkiliya: The ruins



Fig. 43. The Greater street

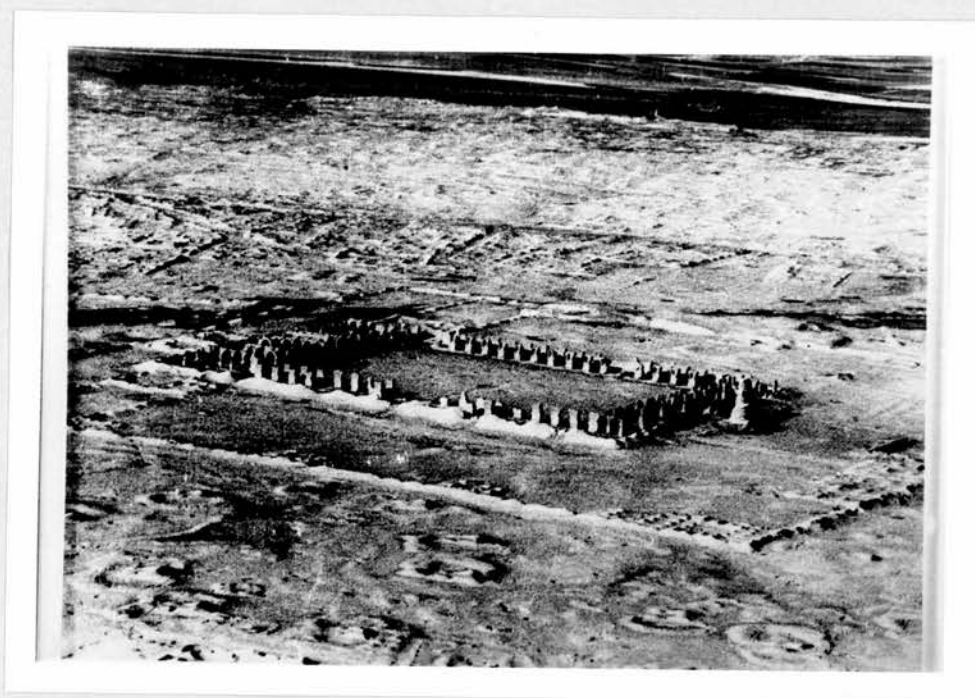


Fig. 44. Abū Dulaf Mosque: an aerial view

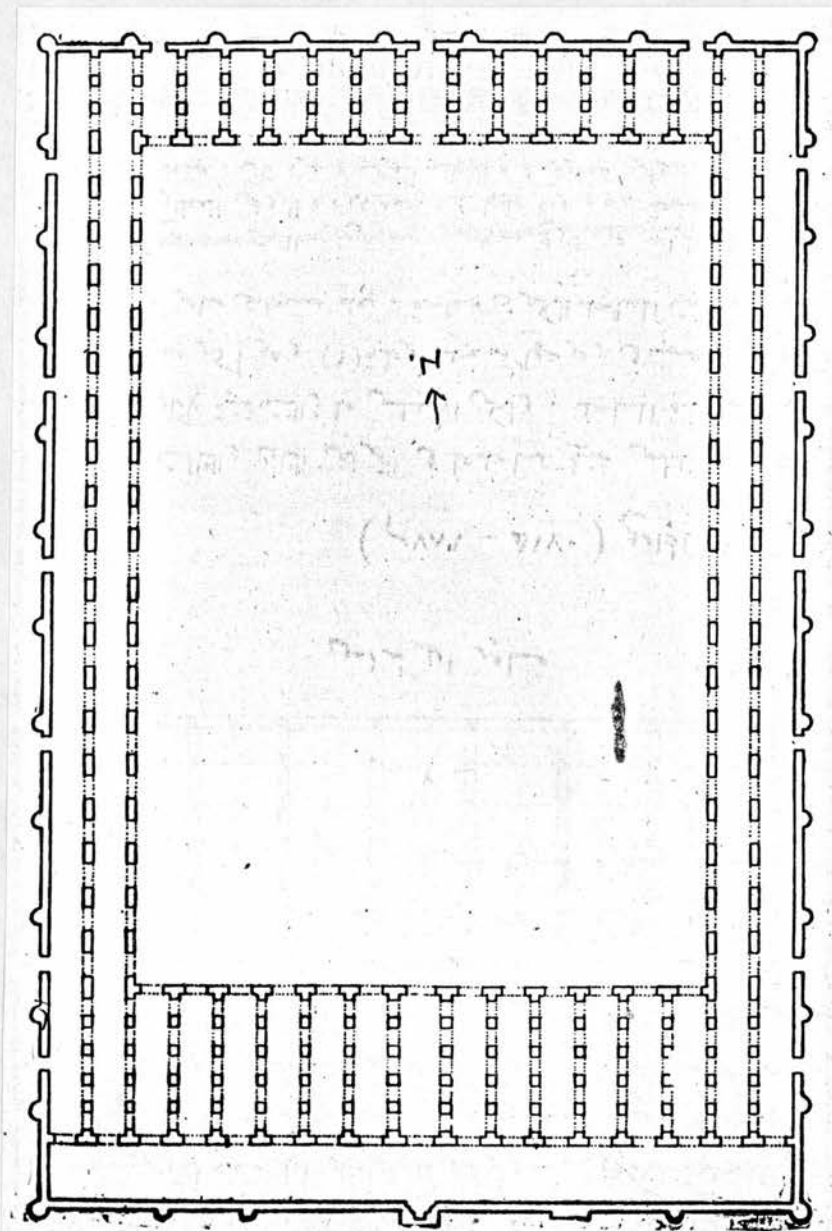


Fig. 45. Abū Dulaf's Mosque: Herzfeld's Plan



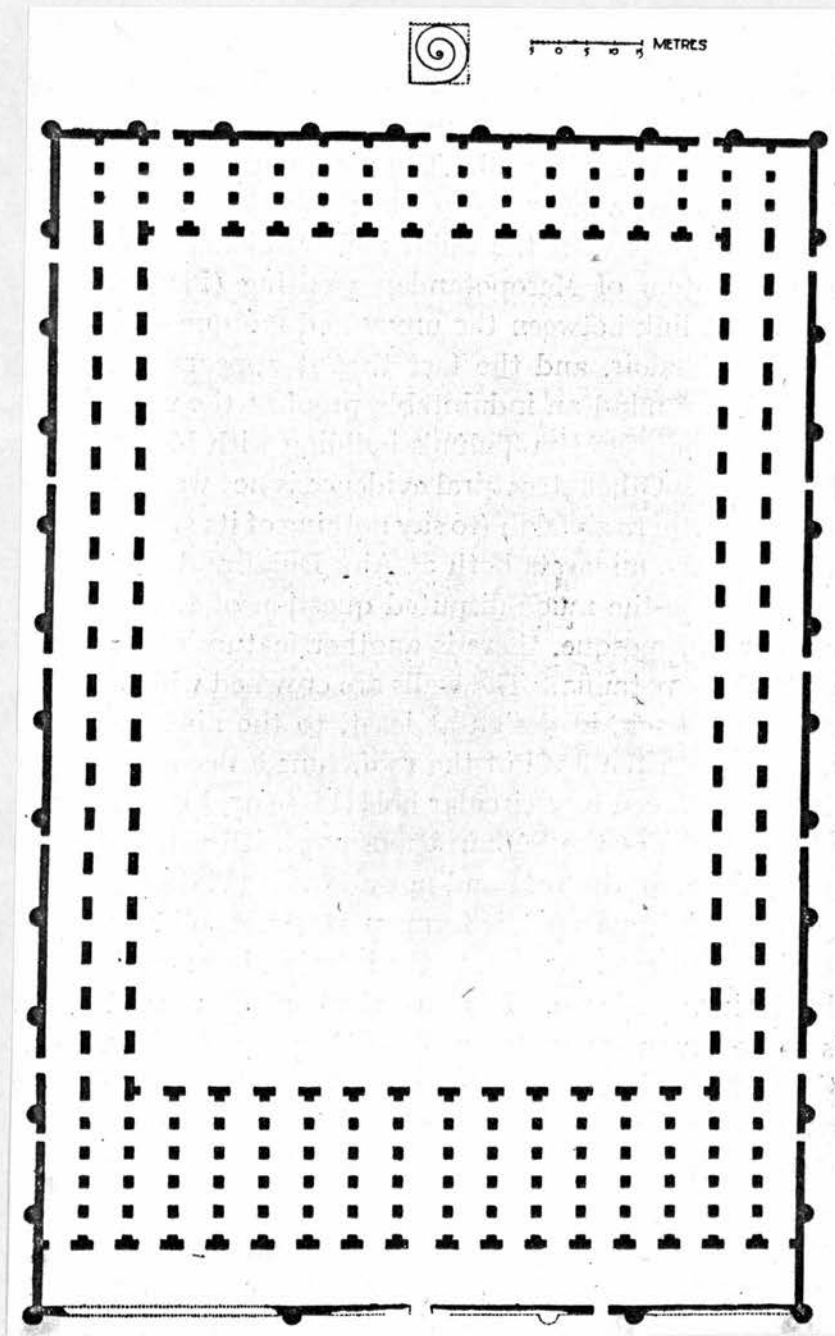


Fig. 46. Abū Dulaf Mosque: Bell's Plan

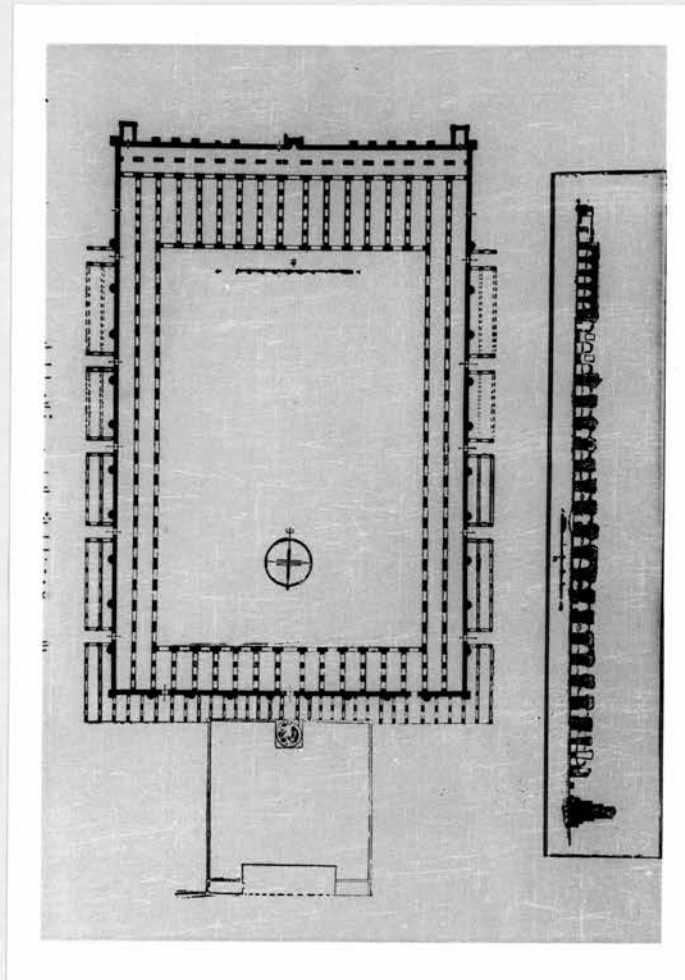


Fig. 47. Abū Dulaf Mosque: Fransīs and 'Ali's Plan



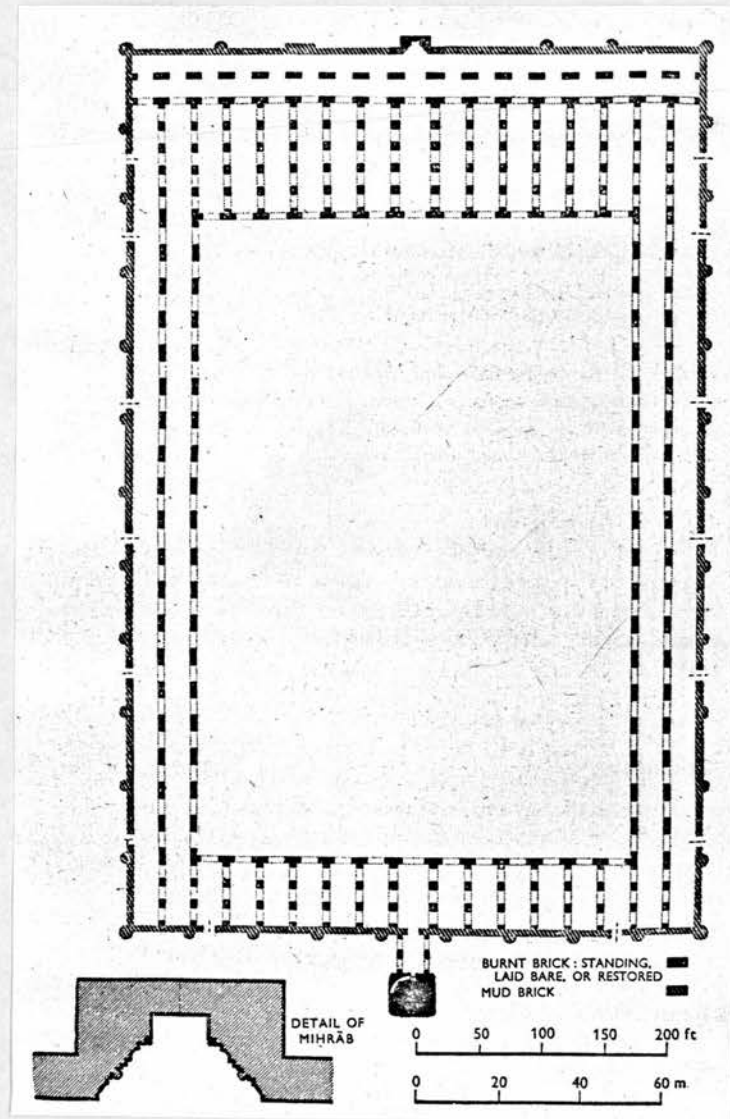


Fig. 48. Abū Dulaf Mosque: Creswell's Plan

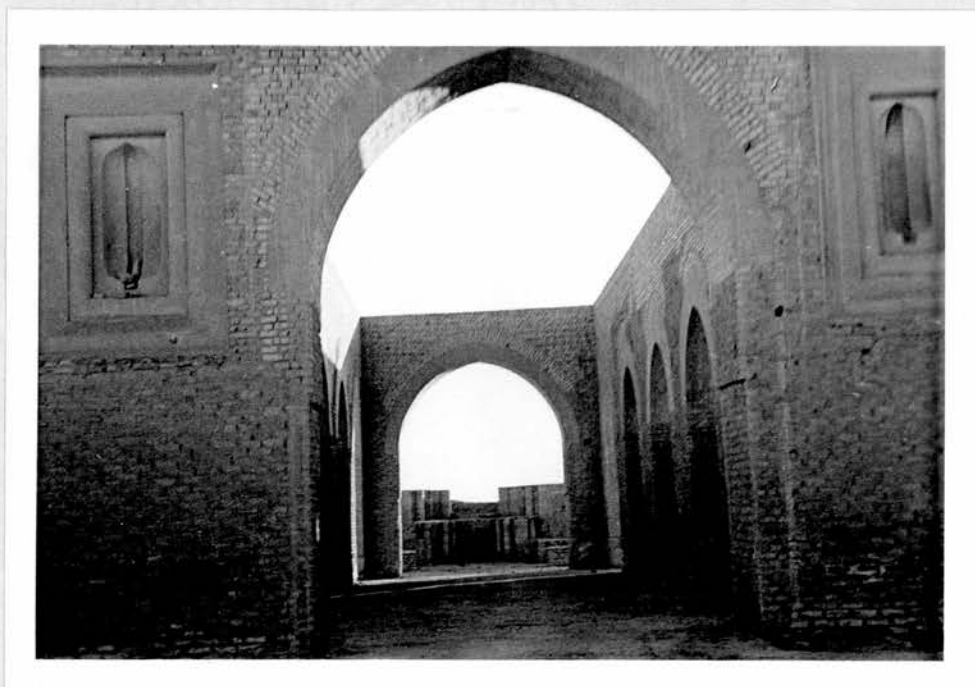


Fig. 49. Abū Dulaf Mosque: The central aisle of the Ḥaram

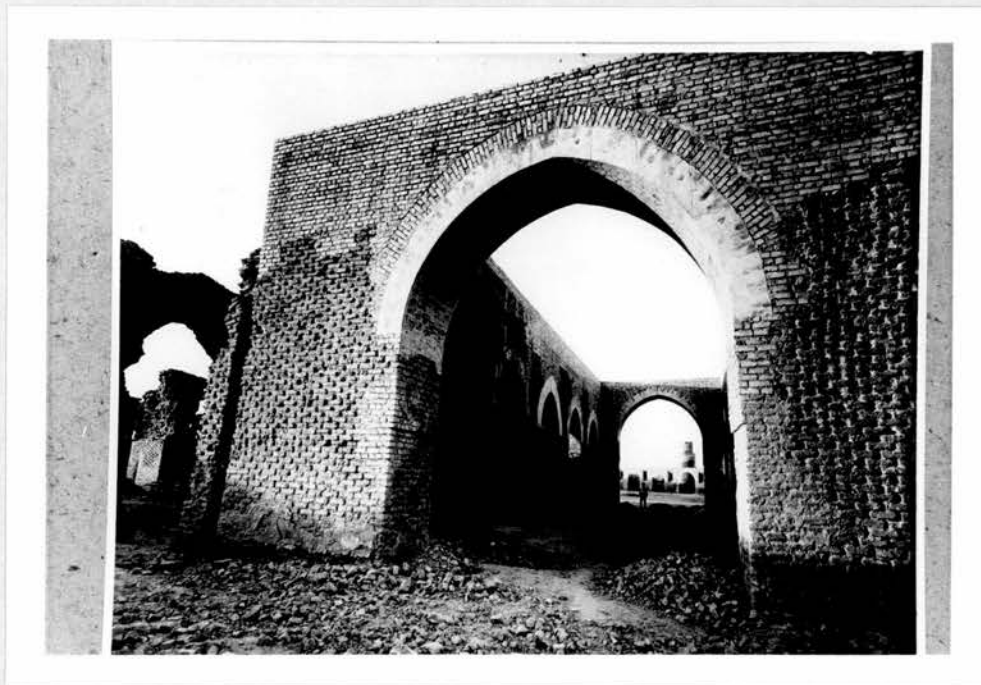


Fig. 50. Abū Dulaf Mosque: The central aisle opposite the Mihrab and facing the transept



Fig. 51. Abū Dulaf Mosque: one of the western aisles





Fig. 52. Abū Dulaf Mosque: The Northern arcades ending at the Sahn



Fig. 53. Abū Dulaf Mosque: The entrance to the central aisle on the north part





Fig. 54. Abū Dulaf Mosque: The sahn surrounded by aisles

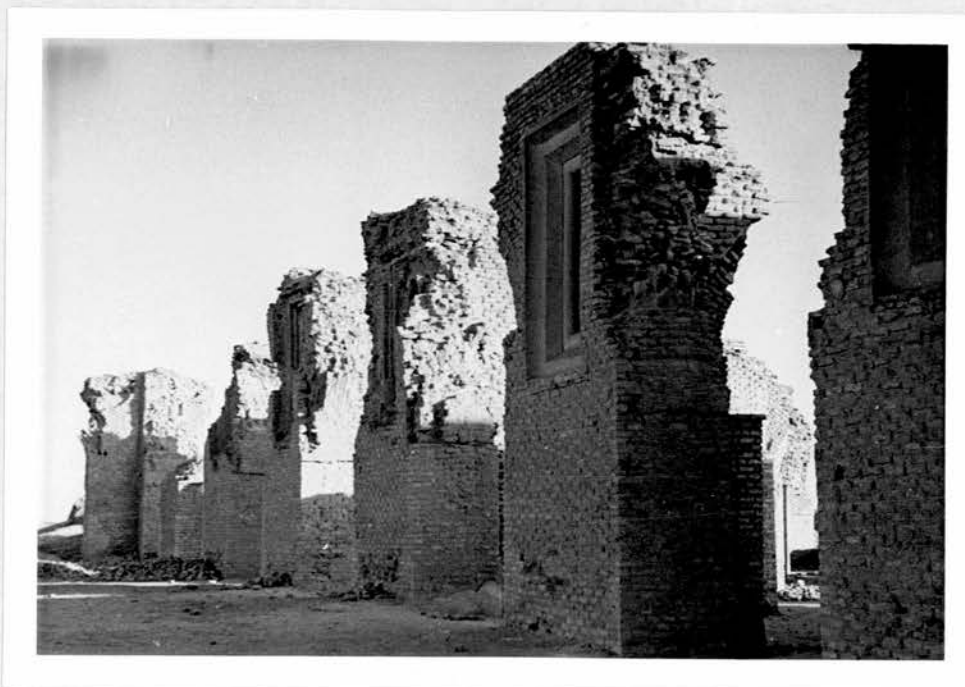


Fig. 55(a) Abū Dulaf Mosque: The north facade decorated with recessed panel (before restoration)

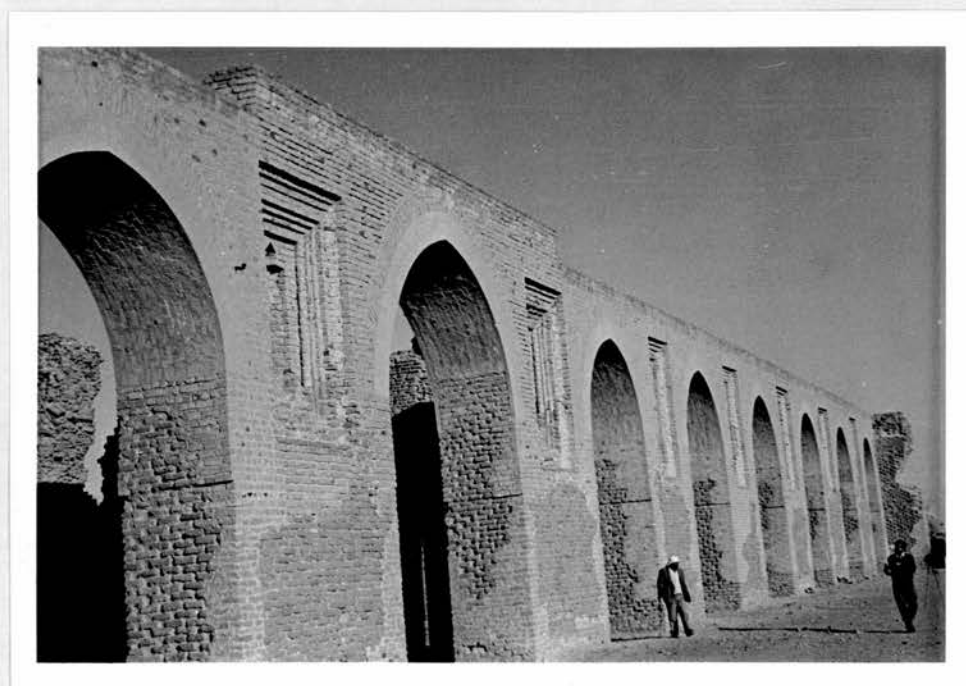


Fig. 55(b) Abū Dulaf Mosque: the north facade decorated with recessed panel (after restoration)

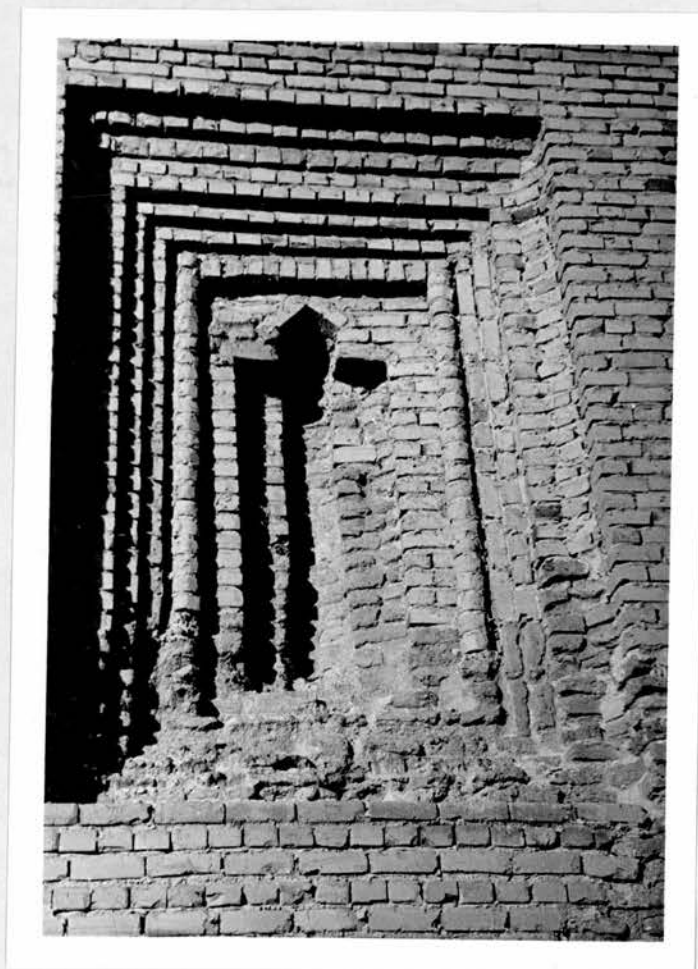
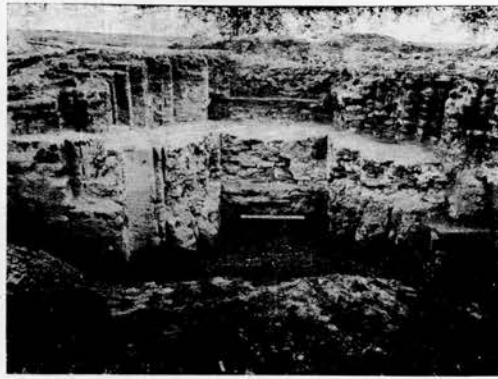


Fig. 56. Abū Dulaf Mosque: One of the recessed panels



Fig. 57. Abū Dulaf Mosque: The recessed panel  
(before restoration)





(١) المحراب الأول والمنجرب المسجد بعد رفع الانتفاض



Fig. 58. Abū Dulaf Mosque: The Mihrab

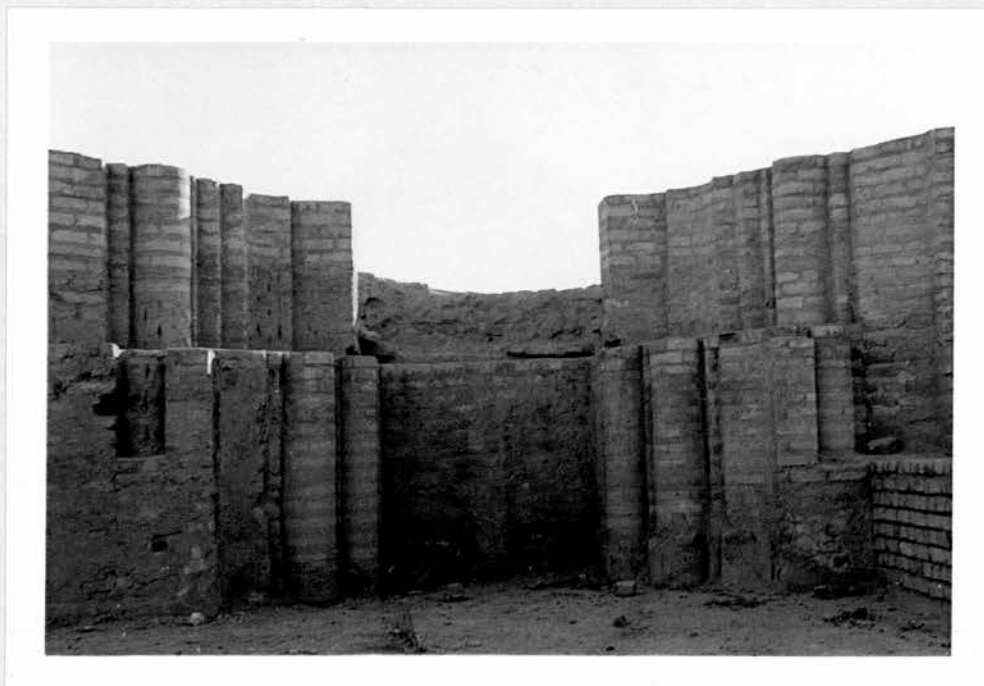


Fig. 59. Abū Dulaf Mosque: The first and the second mihrabs



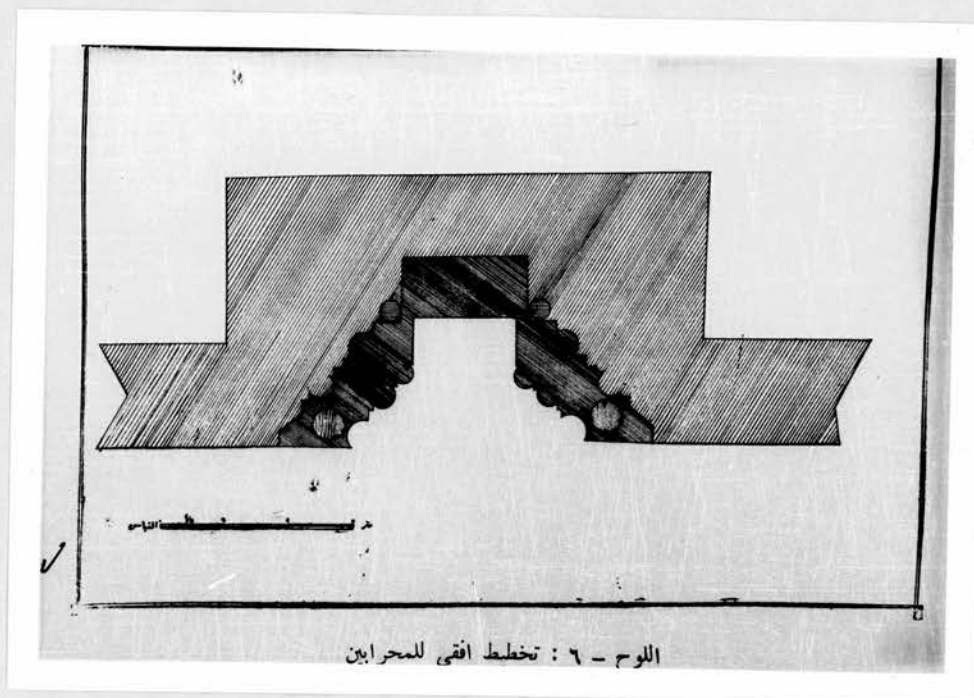


Fig. 60. Abū Dulaf Mosque: Horizontal section of the two mihrabs (by Fransīs and ‘Alī)



Fig. 61. Abū Dulaf Mosque: The Minaret before restoration

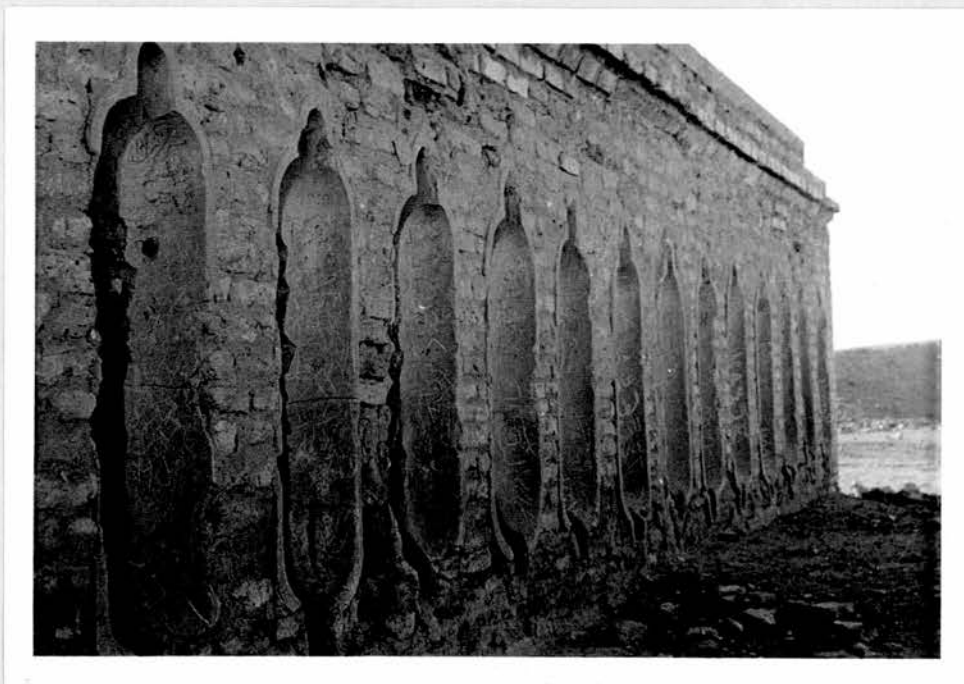


Fig. 62. Abū Dulaf Mosque: The niches on the northern face of the base

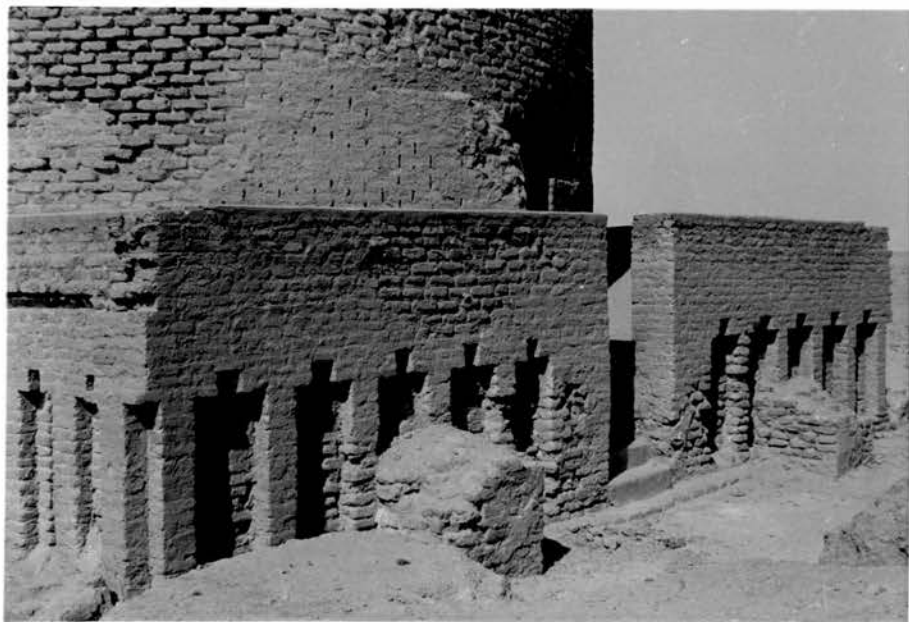


Fig. 63. Abū Dulaf Mosque: The entrance of the minaret from south west (from Muḥammad)

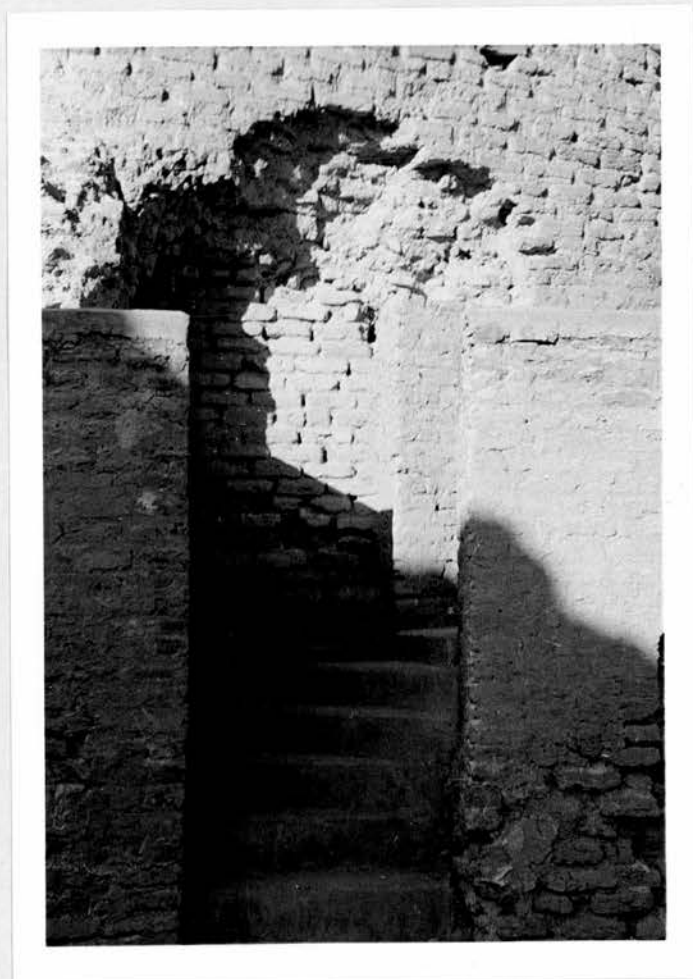


Fig. 64. Abū Dulaf Mosque: The first steps of the entrance of the minaret





Fig. 65. Abū Dulaf Mosque: The Minaret from south



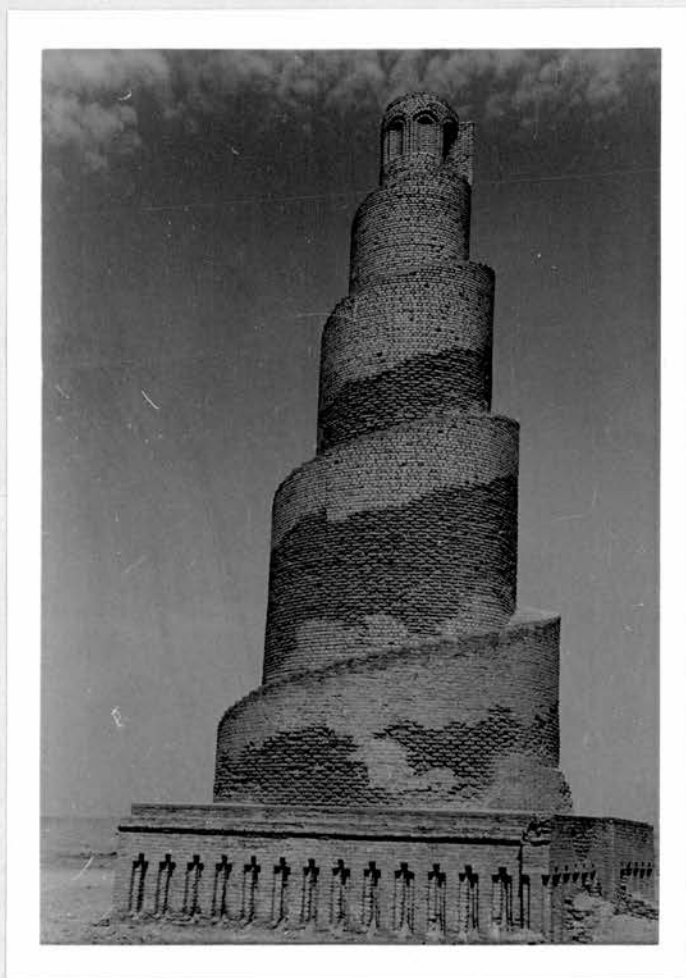
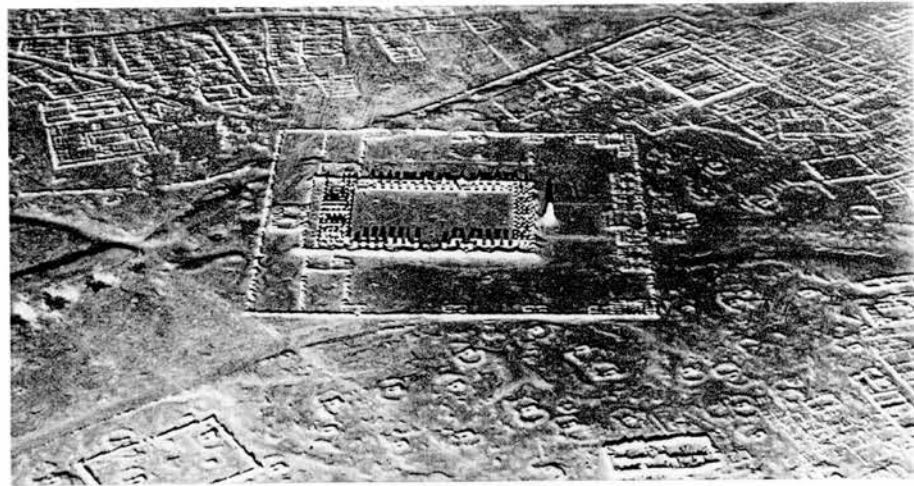


Fig. 66. Abū Dulaf Mosque: The minaret after restoration  
(from Muḥammad)



أبو دلف : منظر جوی  
Ebou Datef : photographie aérienne  
Abu-Dalaf : air view.

Fig. 67. Abū Dulaf Mosque: aerial view showing the additions

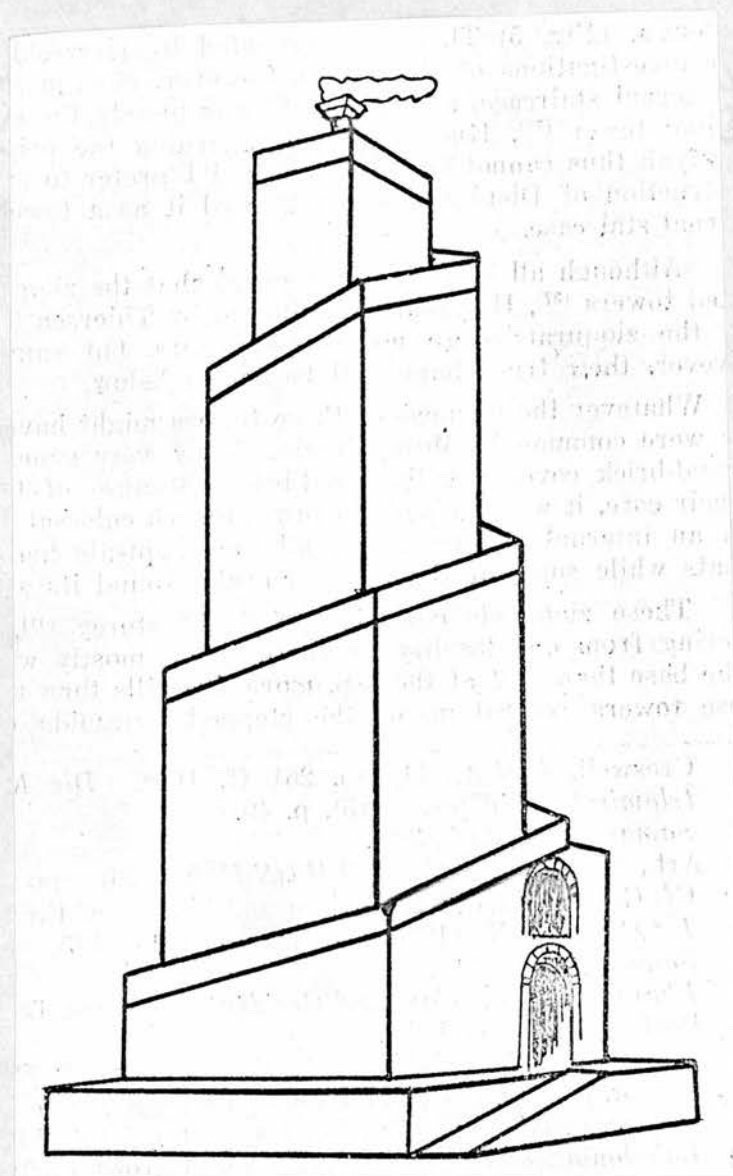


Fig. 68. Fīrāzābād: Tower of Gūr reconstructed by Dieulafoy

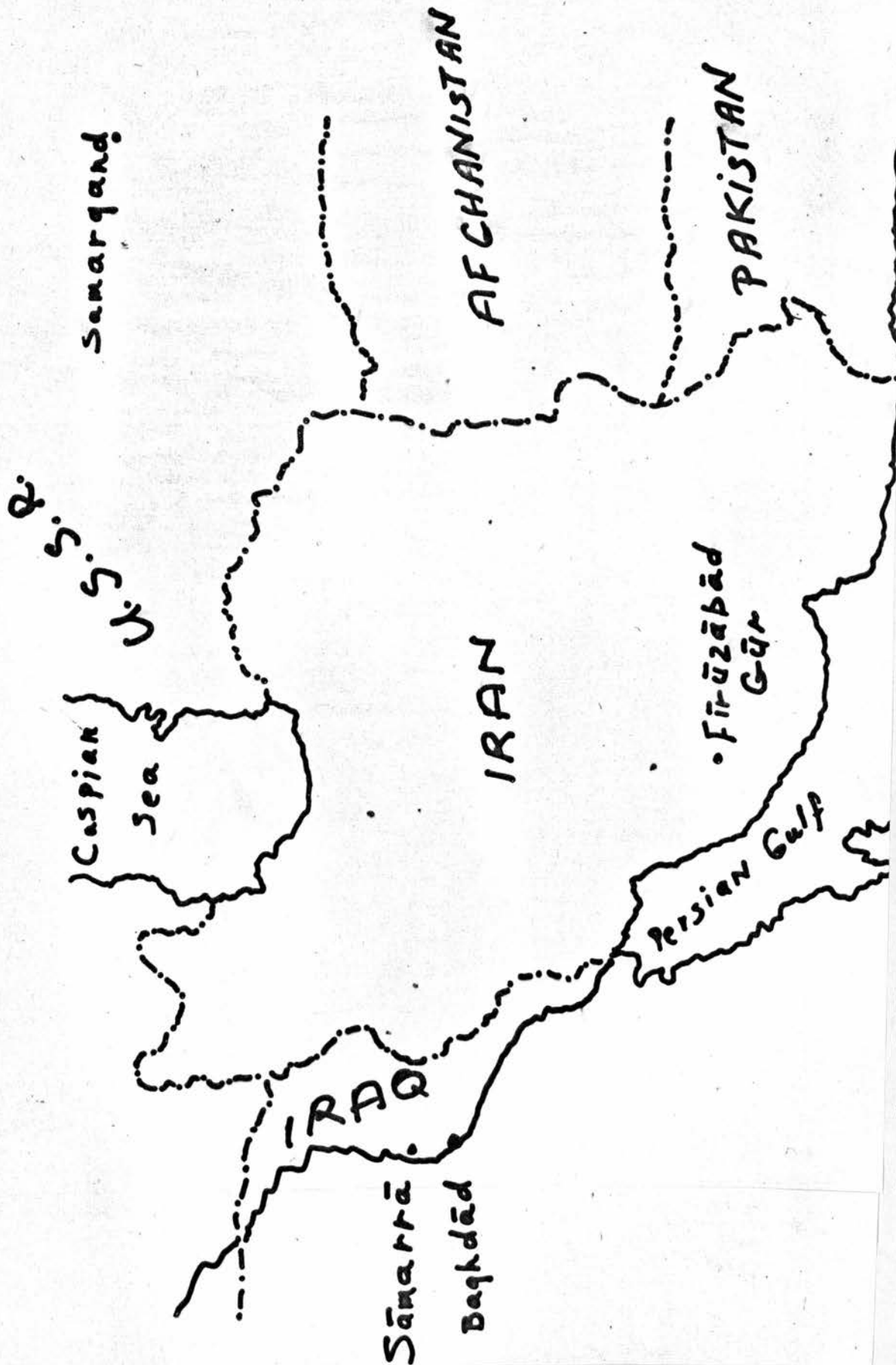


Fig. 69. IRAN: Map of Iran



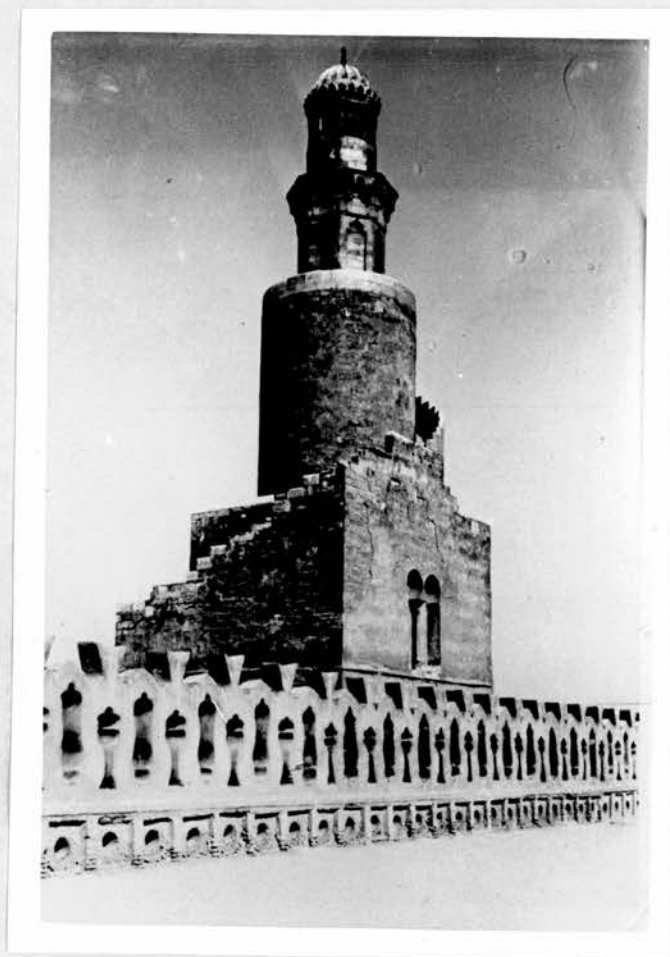


Fig. 70. Cairo. Ibn Tūlūn Mosque: The minaret

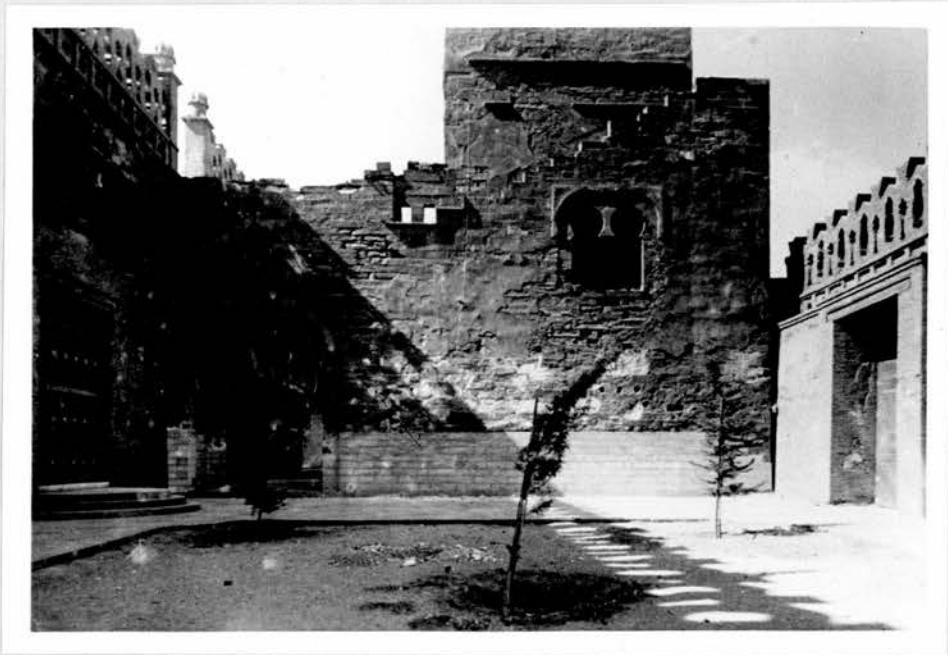


Fig. 71. Cairo. Ibn Tūlūn Mosque: The stone bridge



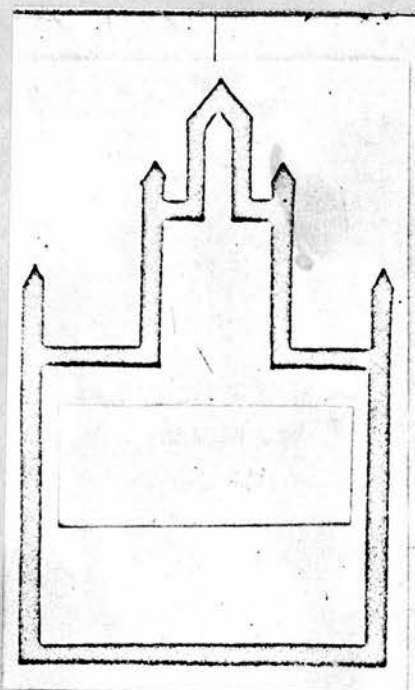


Fig. 72. Alexandria: The Pharos: Yā'qūt's Plan

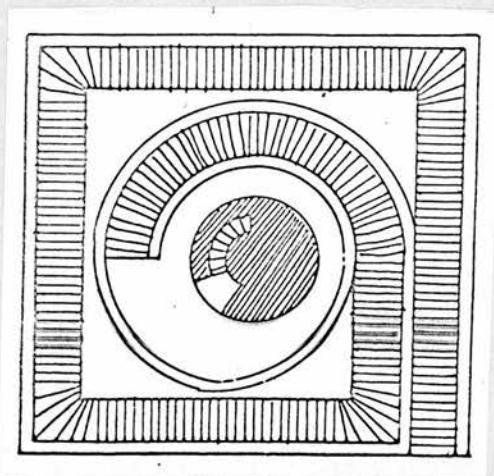


Fig. 73. Cairo. Ibn Ṭulūn Mosque: Plan of the minaret by Dieulafoy

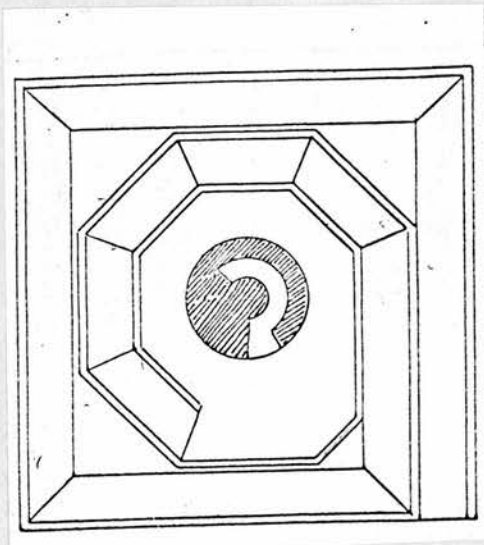


Fig. 74. Alexandria: The plan of Pharos by Herzfeld

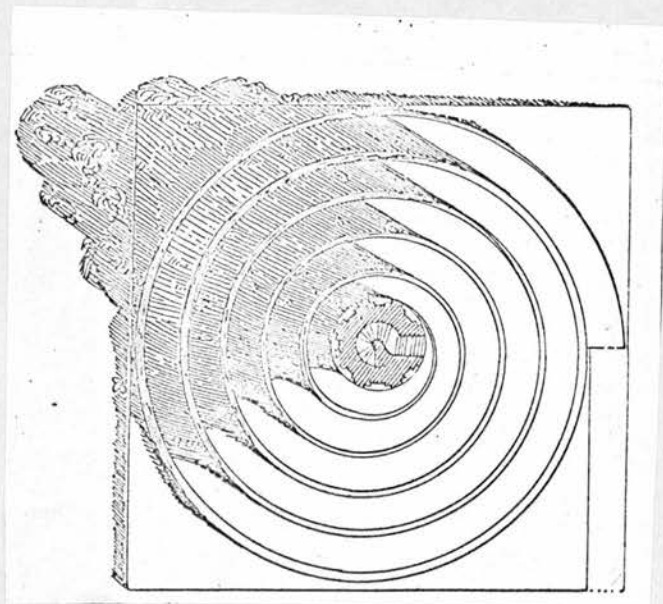


Fig. 75. Sāmarrā. Great Mosque. Plan of Malwīya by Herzfeld